

WARREN  
MAGAZINE



VAMPI  
#32

APRIL 1974

ALL NEW STORIES AND ART! PLUS **COLOR!**

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PDC

\$1.00

# VAMPIRELLA

WHAT IS THE SECRET  
OF THE PLAGUE?  
CAN EVEN  
VAMPIRELLA  
WITHSTAND  
THE CURSE...

...THAT  
ROTS FLESH  
FROM THE  
BONES OF MEN?  
"RUNNING  
RED!"



PLUS: "HARRY" A CLASSIC TALE OF GOTHIC HORROR  
WITH ART BY JEFF JONES AND COLOR BY RICH CORBEN!



**THERE'S A BRAND NEW  
WARREN MAGAZINE  
ON SALE RIGHT NOW!**

# THE SPIRIT



Here's a puzzle any amateur sleuth can solve. What does a man from the future, a death-bound trolley, three escaped convicts, and a murderous seven-year-old have in common? Give up? The answer's simple. They're all featured in the first issue of the new action-filled mystery magazine, **THE SPIRIT**. The Spirit! Will Eisner's revolutionary crime-fighter of the forties; dread avenger from beyond the grave. The Spirit! Two-fisted agent of justice... and Warren Publishing's boldest magazine to date. The first collector's edition is on sale NOW! Find **THE SPIRIT**... before **HE** finds **YOU**!

**ON SALE NOW!!**







**OUR COVER**  
Vampi gets more than she bargained for when the man of her dreams meets "The Running Red." Behind this cover painting of Vampi and her hapless love is artist Enrich.

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**JEFF JONES**  
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# VAMPIRELLA

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## "The Corben art continually boggles my mind!"

I sit here with VAMPIRELLA #30 before me, and I am totally amazed at the new things that keep springing up in the Warren line. The first recent change was the color sections. Not satisfied with 'just' color spreads, you turn in the next big advance, **Richard Corben!** The Corben art continually boggles my mind! And yet, this is still not all. We are now to be placed in the almost staggering position of once again witnessing a step forward for Warren-kind in the long-awaited (but greatly appreciated) return of **Frank Frazetta**. Now that Frazetta is back, I hope whoever draws the interiors on "Luana" will complement Frazetta's cover art.

One is now forced to wonder what new wizardry is brewing in the minds of the people at Warren!

**STEVEN JOHN**  
Wichita, Kan.

Just a short note to tell you that VAMPIRELLA #30 was sensational. "Memoirs of a Killer" was just great, and I loved "Pantha." "Captain Death" was simply maddening! You should have more great stories like these.

**CONNIE GILBERT**  
Grosse Pointe, Mich.

Your magazine has hit some Loew points lately, due to some pretty nice stories by **Flaxman Loew**, who is certainly a very able successor to **Archie Goodwin**. He adds dimension to the personality of VAMPIRELLA as an individual, as a member of an alien race, and as a woman. Far out, **Flax!** (By the way, what's your real name?) I must agree with **Alcyne Elliot**, though. She believed, more or less, that **Adam Van Helsing** is a necessary element in making your stories more interesting. Although I would like to see more of Adam, I don't want to see him (or his father and Pandy) in every single issue. A little moderation, please. And judging from fan reaction in recent letter columns, this seems to be your best course of action.

**Auraleon** is doing a nice job with the "Pantha" series. His first installment in VAMPI #30 was far out! And **Fernando Fernandez**... need I say more? "Captain Death" was very strange, and I can hardly wait to read "Luana."

Say, VAMPI. Rumor has it that yet a fifth Warren mag will soon be out. Any comment?

**STEVEN SCHEIBNER**  
Jackson Heights, N.Y.

The 'rumor' is true, and the magazine is THE SPIRIT. In case your newsstand is sold out, you can order a copy directly from WARREN PUBLISHING.

VAMPI, you really outdid yourself in issue #30. Tell me, is "Pantha" going to become a regular in your mag? I certainly hope so. "As Though They Were Living" was great! Keep **Rich Corben** until he dies, and maybe even after that. His art is the best in the history of your mag. The rest of the stories were 'Grade A.' As for the vampire-toothed worms of Spain, I'd never heard of them.

Keep "History of Vampires" coming! And finally, in "God of Blood," how do you pronounce **Huitzilopochtli**?

**FREDDY COLE**  
Centerville, Ga.

Well, to answer the easy question first, **Huitzilopochtli** is pronounced "Wits-ill-o-pock-tul-i." And yes, "Pantha" will be a regular feature in VAMPIRELLA.

**Sanjulian** is just about the all-time greatest Warren cover artist. But when I read the latest edition of "Vampi's Vault," I almost fell over. **Frank Frazetta** is back. For me and probably a lot of others, Frazetta is a 'complete' artist. His paperback book illustrations and Warren work are unsurpassed. Covers like VAMPI #7 and CREEPY #7 cannot be topped by anyone!

So in case I haven't made it clear, welcome back **Frank Frazetta**!

**JOE GUBOCKI**  
Tucson, Ariz.

In all honesty, I am worried about the way in which the character of my favorite vampiress is being handled. The idea of a subconscious mental block against taking human life would, I feel, destroy the mystery and allure of VAMPIRELLA. I believe that a great deal of her popularity is due to the contrasts in her personality. She is more than just a beautiful heroine. Our VAMPI is different because with every spin of the globe, she might (and occasionally does) change suddenly from that beautiful, gentle woman to a savage, unreasoning killer, a danger to all around her. Including those for whom she cares.

VAMPI'S inner-struggle is an interesting one to follow, as are the exploits with her comrades. And fears about what she has done before and may do again at any time are what make her more than just a comic strip character. Take this quality away from VAMPIRELLA, and she will lose her uniqueness.

**SCOTT STANSBURY**  
Seattle, Wa.

Well, you folks down at **Warren Publishing** blew it again. I have become very attached to VAMPI's bat tattoo. In VAMPIRELLA #30, **Jose Gonzalez** (who, I think, is the best comic artist around) failed to include the little tattoo. Just wanted to let you know!

Generally, the artwork in this issue was excellent. Except on the cover, that is, where **Enrich** made VAMPIRELLA look as if she's put on a little weight. I hope this isn't so. Also, he forgot the bracelet on VAMPI's left wrist. But I don't want you to think that all I did was go mistake-hunting! **Steve Skeates'** story "Pantha: Rebirth" was very good, and all in all, VAMPI #30 was a very fine issue.

**FRANK NUNEZ**  
Sanger, Cal.

Although I've been a comic book collector for years, and purchase over fifty different comics each month, yours is the first magazine to which I am writing.

Generally speaking, your cover artist, **Enrich**, is the greatest artist in the business, and the writers who produce your stories should give themselves a hearty pat on the back. So no complaint there. But issue #30 just didn't have enough of VAMPI in it! Only twelve pages of story! How about a special issue with a full-length VAMPIRELLA adventure.

**MOISIS MELENDEZ**  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

I think your mag is just about the finest in the world because of the super color and the super stories!

As for issue #30, "The God of Blood" was good, but bring back Adam and his father.

"Pantha" is one wild character, and I'm glad **Steve Skeates** is scripting her. No other writer could do her justice. And **Auraleon's** art was the best I've ever seen it!

"As Though They Were Living" was the greatest in terms of art and coloring, and the story wasn't bad either! "Memoirs of a Killer" and "Captain Death" weren't that great storywise, but the art was good. C'mon! **Flaxman Loew** has got to be a pseudonym. No one has a name like that!

Personally, I'd like to see some change in VAMPI's attire as **Shiela Thorton** of Brooklyn suggested. I'd like to see VAMPI in hot pants and in many other different styles of clothing as well. By the way, I can tell "Luana" is gonna be one far-out chick!

**STEVE HORNBECK**  
Lake Katrine, N.Y.



Competition for VAMPI? Some of our readers seem to think so. Her name is Susan, and she's the brutal PANTHA. Her third adventure is featured in this issue of VAMPIRELLA.

## "Keep 'History of Vampires'"

I think that **VAMPIRELLA** #30 was excellent. I have only recently started collecting your magazine, but it's already one of my favorites! My other favorites, of course, are **CREEPY** and **EERIE**.

**TIM MODERSOHN**  
Bolingbrook, Ill.

A number of interesting comments appeared in the fan page of **VAMPIRELLA** #30, and I'd like to take this opportunity to express my own feelings on the subject in question.

Those who are against the return of Adam Van Helsing and his father, to the **VAMPIRELLA** series, have valid arguments. A few of them might go as follows:

1) Tying **VAMPI** down to Adam would restrict her independence and thus put our heroine in a rut. I disagree. Back in earlier issues, she was very involved with Adam, and a few of the dangers they faced together were among the best: Pope Verdou, W.W. Wade, Father Jonas.

2) An emotional bond with Adam would reduce her effectiveness as the focal point for a story. I doubt this. If anything, a relationship with Adam, either as a lover or friend, would add to the impact of each story. Not only could an author develop the plot, but the **VAMPI**/Adam relationship as well.

3) Adam's father would oppose such a relationship. I don't know about this one. Certainly, in the earlier stories he would have. However, the situation has since changed. I think he accepts **VAMPI** for what she is... although I don't know if he'd want her for a daughter-in-law!

Now on to issue #30. All I can say is **terrific!** In addition to some great stories and artwork (Rich Corben's art on "As Though They Were Living" was exceptionally good), Mr. Flaxman Loew once again gave us a superior story in "The God of Blood." I'll be chewing my fingernails down to the knuckles waiting for the second half of the story!

**NORMAN E. DAVISON**  
Union, N.J.

I just wanted to let you know that **VAMPIRELLA** #30 was really great! Keep running the color sections by Rich Corben. I have followed Corben from the underground to the overground and he is getting better all the time. I think your magazines are maturing into something really special. Way to go, **VAMPI**!

**MIKE PHILLIPS**  
Tornado, W. Va.

I've been reading your magazines now for about six years on an irregular basis. When I cruise on down to the magazine store in our town, the first thing I do is check to see if they've gotten the new **VAMPIRELLA**. Of course, if I find myself face-to-face with **UNCLE CREEPY** or **COUSIN EERIE**, you can bet your eye-teeth I wouldn't pass 'em up!

Some of my friends think I'm stupid and immature for buying such 'trash,' as they call it. Well, I don't think I'm 'stupid' for wanting to read some of the finest and most enjoyable horror fiction around. And I'm certainly no more immature than they. All they seem to be interested in are car books and motorcycle magazines. So, big deal! I'd rather look at **VAMPIRELLA** than a hunk of metal.

I really dig settling down with a new issue and letting my mind run wild. Sometimes I read a particular tale two or three times if it's well-executed. I think Jose Gonzalez is the most excellent artist in the great lineup of Warren artists. He makes **VAMPI** literally jump off the page with realism. She almost strikes me as being a real person instead of just a cartoon character. Once in a while the stories themselves need work, but all in all, I find myself most absorbed in what I'm reading. Which brings me to the point of this letter.

I had just come home from a date with a new girl I'd met, and asked her if she'd come in for some coffee and cake. It was rather late, but she agreed. I never mentioned to her that I read your magazine because of some foolish notion that girls just weren't into that sort of thing. Was I ever wrong! While I got the goodies ready, she found a pile of **VAMPI**'s on my desk. I was shocked to find that she not only approved of your mags, but was an avid fan herself! We then started what must have been one of the longest discussions in history on the Warren magazines.

So all I can say is, thanks for the perfect finale to a great evening!

**CHRISTOPHER STEPHAN**  
Maywood, N.J.

It's our pleasure, Chris! Only next time, why not invite us all for coffee and cake?

Your latest magazine, **VAMPIRELLA** #30, was tops! And I'm already waiting for the next issue, just as I do every month. **VAMPI**, you're great! But why aren't you weekly?

**JOHN W. ALLEN**  
Alamagordo, N.M.



Our heroine in the arms of the Sun-God **HUITZILOPOCHTLI**. The **JOSE GONZALEZ** illustration is from the very well-received **FLAXMAN LOEW** tale "God of Blood" in **VAMPI** #30.

I have just purchased **VAMPIRELLA** #30 and have but one comment to make. Get rid of 'Luana' before she even takes shape! Squash her in some less worthy rag, but keep her away from **VAMPIRELLA**! Judging by the back cover illo, she looks to be a bore! She looks ugly. And even if she's not, we don't need a tiger-chick competing for space with **VAMPIRELLA**! If I wanted that type of story I'd buy a book with any number of inferior jungle guys and gals in it. Save your magazine for the same sort of excellent stories you've been running thus far!

**RICK NIEBER**  
Maynard, Mass.

You've obviously been with us long enough to know that we wouldn't run anything in **VAMPIRELLA** (or any of our other magazines) that didn't meet with our high standards of excellence. So give our jungle ms. a chance, okay?

Normally, my literary preference is toward those works by authors of high caliber such as **Edgar Rice Burroughs**, **H.G. Wells**, **Arthur C. Clarke**, and so on. In a nutshell, I like a good science fiction story. But now that I'm in the service, I find myself cut off from most of the science fiction I like. So I've looked toward new horizons, and find your **VAMPIRELLA** magazine a rather enjoyable substitute. As of now I have only three of your magazines, but through back-issues and a subscription I'm hoping to increase that quantity.

About the only thing wrong with **VAMPIRELLA** #30 was the story "Memoirs of a Killer." If you recall the killings in and around Ann Arbor, Mich. (I live not far from there), you may understand my feelings. Other than that, the issue was well-done and thought-provoking.

**MARC B. PELTON**  
Ft. Jackson, S.C.

## IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG WINTER! ESPECIALLY IF YOU DON'T WRITE!

Seems not enough of you are writing and **VAMPI**'s been in the dumps all week. Help an ailing vampiress today—WRITE!

The address is:  
**SCARLET LETTERS**  
c/o Warren Publishing Co.  
145 East 32nd Street  
New York, N.Y. 10016





# VAMPIR'S VAULT

THE DEMONIC STORY OF DEVILISH DELINEATOR

## RAMON TORRENTS

WILDLY IMAGINATIVE FANTASY ARTICLE



naut or a fireman, Ramon was busy writing and drawing his own comic stories. These, he notes with some sarcasm, were sent to publishers who encouraged him to practice.

"My stories were filed away, forever," Ramon commented.

But the young Ramon was not discouraged. He pursued his chosen career with a feverish determination to master all forms of artistic rendering. And a decade later, at the ripe old age of twenty, he began freelancing in a professional capacity for magazines the world over.

Despite being in great demand, Ramon found time to sate the stirrings of his imagination by bringing the fantastic "Five For Infinity" to pictorial life. This was a series later carried on by fellow Spaniard, the very talented Esteban Maroto (profiled in EERIE #38).

An intense, dedicated artist, we predict Ramon Torrents a strong contender for future plaudits from fantasy fans and fellow professionals alike.

Readers of CREEPY, EERIE, and VAMPIRELLA first became aware of Ramon Torrents with the 51st issue of CREEPY. Ramon went on to win the 1973 Warren Award as Best All Around Artist and has been featured regularly in all Warren titles since.

Ramon was born in Barcelona 35 years ago, and admits that very early in life he became familiar with what have long been his favorite subjects: science fiction and fantasy. So it was, at the age of ten, that when most boys dream of one day becoming an astro-



Ramon Torrents' on Satan's power over earth. From "Demon Child," in VAMPIRELLA #26.

## YOU'RE PAYING MORE FOR WARREN MAGAZINES THIS MONTH. WE THINK YOU OUGHT TO KNOW WHY.

As with almost everything these days, the price of our magazines has just risen. Unfortunately the price rise was inevitable and unavoidable. During the past year the price of printing and paper has gone up phenomenally. And in 1974 these prices will continue to rise as newsprint paper remains in short supply.

The cost of living is also rising. And with it we must raise the rates we currently pay our contributors, our artists and writers.

To offset these additional costs we have had to add to the cover price of this magazine.

But we are not asking our readers to pay extra for the same WARREN Magazine. We've added eight additional pages to our books. Eight more pages of the very best stories and art published in comics today.

Instead of the usual 64 pages in each issue of CREEPY and VAMPIRELLA you'll now receive 72 inside pages. Our EERIE magazine remains 72 pages—but with an added 8 pages of color comics each issue.

Our subscription prices remain the same, and we hope we'll not be forced to change these rates.

So, while you may be paying a little more for your WARREN Magazines, we can promise you two things each time you purchase an issue: first, you'll be getting the absolute best in comics; the very finest stories and art being published today. Second, we guarantee that the magazine you buy will substantially increase in value—as have all the WARREN Magazines since the first issue of our first magazine, over 15 years ago.

One final word about our competition. Their magazines cost less. We read them, and we think they're worth less. One competitor continually shouts about their so-called 'brand name.' They've been publishing 20¢ comics for a long time and they would have you believe that their black and white comics are good because their 'brand name' has been around for quite a while.

Don't be fooled.

Don't take brand names for what they aren't. Particularly in comics. Compare us with our competitors. Judge for yourself the level of quality and style. Yes, they cost less—but a publisher cannot cut costs without cutting value to the reader.

We think our readers prefer the extra value and the extra quality. And that's exactly the kind of magazine we're going to publish.

## FANZINE REVIEWS

FANZINES are amateur publications produced by comic book fans, geared to an audience with a similar interest in comics. They contain a diversity of material, from historical articles on comics of the past, to discussions of current comics and news of comics yet to come! Fanzines are available only by MAIL, direct from their publishers! We think you'll enjoy reading some of the better examples from the present fanzine market!

### DARK FANTASY

Box 1185  
Genanogue, Ontario.  
\$1.25

Obviously a labor of love, **Dark Fantasy** is a 66-page publication that features striking artwork and sports, interesting short stories and poetry by primarily Canadian authors. **Dark Fantasy** declares itself, "The Magazine of Amateur Creators," and while this label is not wholly accurate, the book does indeed suffer from a lack of firm editorial control. The stories are allowed to run on interminably, and their hodge-podge organization leaves something to be desired. But there is food for thought.

### QUINTESSENCE

1723 West Spofford  
Spokane, Wash. 99205  
\$1.00

**Quintessence** is a well-researched, intelligent magazine of comics and fantasy. **John Achziger** has assembled a magnificent collection of articles on Perry Rhodan, Conan, Zorro, and Star Trek, a striking and beautifully tongue-in-cheek **Dennis Fujitake** portfolio of super heroines, and an interesting barbarian strip called **The Mighty Ronthur**. The quality of the printing leaves much to be desired, but the book is well-worth the one dollar investment. Yours to digest for \$1.

### CPL

4010 Mallway Dr. Apt. A  
Indianapolis, Ind. 46236  
35¢

**CPL** is a magazine devoted entirely to comic book literature. The quality of the artwork is good, and the list of professional contributors is impressive. There's a fine review of the new **Star Trek** cartoon series, and there are some interesting notes on the effect of the paper shortage on the comics industry. But only the "Revival-Survival" column is of a professional caliber. **CPL** features illustrations enough of comic characters to satisfy even the most rabid connoisseur of Pictorial Literature.

# VAMPIRELLA

TWO MEN SPIN THE WHEEL OF **CHANCE!**  
BOTH, GAMBLING FOR THE MIGHTIEST  
OF ALL STAKES... THEIR **LIVES!**

ONLY ONE MAN CAN **WIN...**  
WHILE THE OTHER PLUMETS  
HEADLONG TOWARDS HIS **DEATH...**

...TOWARDS THE SHARP DEADLY  
**SPIKES** THAT NOW PROTRUDE  
FROM HIS LIFELESS BODY!

CAUGHT IN THE **VORTEX OF PASSION, DESIRE AND HATE**, THE DELICIOUS CREATURE  
FROM THE VAMPIRE PLANET OF **DRAKULON** WITNESSES THE GHASTLY AFTERMATH OF  
THE GAME THAT MUST END IN TRAGEDY WHEN THE LAWS OF **CHANCE** AND **PROBABILITY**  
ARE FUSED IN THE PHENOMENON OF...

## THE RUNNING RED



THE TENSION IN THE SALON PRIVÉ OF *THE GREAT CASINO* IS OF THE KIND YOU COULD CUT WITH A KNIFE.

THERE'S *BIG* MONEY ON THE TABLE. A YOUNG MAN IS SWEATING. HIS *GUTS* ARE TURNING OVER WITH THE TERROR OF *PROBABLE RUINATION*.

A CROAKING, MOCKING VOICE FROM THE MAN IN THE WHEELCHAIR STEELS HIS NERVE TO MAKE ANOTHER PLAY.

HE SWEEPS ANOTHER PILE OF PLAQUES ON... *BLACK...*



MAKE YOUR PLAY, BOY! WHY DO YOU HESITATE? YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE!

WHO IS THAT *CRAZY* YOUNG MAN?

RUPERT VANDYCK...OF THE PHILADELPHIA VANDYCKS. HIS OLD MAN'S BAILED HIM OUT OF THREE MARRIAGES AND TWO BANKRUPTCIES! BUT I RECKON TONIGHT'S THE END OF THE TRAIL FOR LITTLE RUPIE-BOY!



A FINAL *CLICK-CLICK-CLICK...* AND THE BALL ROLLS TO A *RED NUMBER*!



AAAAAAAHH!  
I'VE LOST THREE  
QUARTERS OF A  
MILLION  
DOLLARS IN  
FOUR SPINS  
OF THE  
WHEEL!

AND THAT  
EVIL-LOOKING  
CREATURE  
WHO'S LEADING  
HIM ON?

JABEZ  
KRUGER THE  
ARMS  
MAGNATE!  
QUIET NOW, THE  
WHEEL'S  
SLOWING DOWN!



NO! NO-O-O-O!  
*EEEEEEEEEEHHH!*





THE GREAT PENDRAGON, ILLUSIONIST EXTRAORDINARY, AND HIS RAVISHING ASSISTANT **VAMPIRELLA** ARE APPEARING IN CABARET AT THE CASINO RESTAURANT!

THAT **KRUGER**...THAT **SADISTIC MONSTER**! HE TAUNTED AND LURED THAT POOR BOY TO HIS DEATH! AND NOW YOU TELL ME WE'RE BOOKED TO DO A SHOW AT HIS PRIVATE VILLA!

IT'S A DATE WE CAN'T AVOID, **VAMPI** DEAR. SURE, COULD SNUB **KRUGER**, BUT THE DOORS OF EVERY THEATRE AND CABARET IN EUROPE WOULD SLAM IN OUR FACES WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!

WHEN I THINK OF THAT BOY'S DYING MOANS...

DON'T, **VAMPI** DEAR! I FEEL THE SPIRIT **EBBING OUT** OF ME!

HIGH IN HIS LUXURY VILLA ABOVE THE GLITTERING TOWN, **KRUGER** IS AT BUSINESS.

I HAVE THE GREATEST ADMIRATION FOR A GAMBLER, SENOR. BY ALL MEANS START A REVOLUTION IN YOUR COUNTRY, AND I WILL SUPPLY YOU WITH ARMS...AT EIGHT PERCENT DISCOUNT.

A MILLION THANKS, SENOR. WHEN MY UNHAPPY COUNTRY IS LIBERATED FROM THE HEEL OF THE TYRANT, YOUR STATUE SHALL STAND IN THE PLAZA.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT!

WHEN HIS VISITOR HAS GONE...

WIRE THE MINISTER OF WAR IN **GUARDIA**.

GIVE HIM A PRECIS OF MY CONVERSATION WITH THAT **MINDLESS MORON**. TELL HIM THE REVOLUTIONARIES WILL BE SUPPLIED WITH SUB-STANDARD ARMS...AND THAT I SHALL EXPECT A GOVERNMENT ORDER FOR FIFTY OF MY FIGHTER PLANES WITH THE VERTICAL TAKE-OFF CAPABILITY...

AND NOW, MY DEAR **DROGA**... TIME FOR **RELAXATION**. CUT THE CARDS! ACES HIGH! IF YOU WIN, I WILL GIVE YOU AN **EMERALD NECKLACE** THAT ONCE GRACED THE THROAT OF THE **TSARINA CATHERINE THE GREAT**, WHOM YOU RESEMBLE IN MANY **PARTICULARS**...

AND IF I LOSE, **JABEZ**?

...THERE WILL BE THE USUAL **RAKE-OFF** FOR HIS EXCELLENCY!





THE *USUAL*  
DELICIOUS FORFEITS,  
MY DEAR....

WHO NEEDS  
ANY OLD  
NECKLACE?

ONE FIGURE...AND ONE FIGURE ALONE, APPEARS  
ON THE DECK OF THE SPLENDID VESSEL. A MAN  
WITHOUT A NAME! HE IS KNOWN IN THE HIGHFLOUN,  
DIZZY WORLD OF THE *INTERNATIONAL LOTUS-  
EATERS* AS, SIMPLY, "*THE TRAVELLER*."



VAMPIRELLA SEES *HIM* ACROSS  
A CROWDED ROOM...



...MADAME  
DROGA, MY...  
COMPANION...

ENCHANTED!

NEXT DAY, AT COCKTAIL HOUR, EVERY EYE IN THE  
HARBOR IS DIRECTED TOWARDS A *SUPER-YACHT*  
THAT GLIDES SILENTLY TO ITS MOORING. BORED AND  
PAMPERED VOICES RISE IN A SHRILL CLAMOR OF  
EXCITEMENT.



IT'S...*HIM*!

I LAST  
SAW HIM IN  
RIO!

SUDDENLY I  
FEEL *WANTON*!  
GIVE ME ANOTHER  
DRINK SOMEBODY!

THAT NIGHT, VAMPI AND PENDRAGON ARRIVE AT THE  
*VILLA ROUGE ET NOIR*, JABEZ KRUGER'S  
SENSATIONAL PAD ABOVE TOWN.



THE ARTISTES OF THE  
CABARET?...THIS WAY,  
PLEASE.

THEIR EYES MEET. A COSMIC FORCE PASSES BETWEEN  
THEM. WORLDS COLLIDE IN THE HEART OF THE LONELY,  
LOVELY GIRL FROM DRAKULON! A SMALL BIRD SINGS A  
PURE, HIGH NOTE OF JOY.





THEY ENTERTAIN THE ARMS MAGNATE AND HIS GUESTS. BUT VAMPIRELLA ONLY HAS EYES FOR... HIM...

MY BEAUTIFUL ASSISTANT WILL NOW VANISH...  
**SO!**

**SO!**

**SO!!**...FOR THE LOVE O' MIKE, VAMPI, ARE YOU TRYING TO DRIVE ME TO DRINK?

AFTERWARDS...

THEY TELL ME THAT YOU, ALSO, ARE A GAMBLING MAN.

GAMBLING HAS BEEN A **RULING** PASSION FOR...ALL OF MY LIFETIME.

AND MINE! I HAVE DEvised A GAME THAT MIGHT AMUSE YOU. TO PLAY, YOU SIMPLY NEED A POTENTIAL CAPITAL OF FIFTY MILLION FRANCS... PLUS A STEADY NERVE! DOES THE PROPOSITION PLEASE YOU?

WHEN DO WE PLAY?

THE SALON PRIVE OF THE CASINO... TOMORROW NIGHT... SHALL WE SAY, AFTER DINNER?

THE LOOK IS FOR KRUGER, BUT VAMPIRELLA KNOWS THAT THE WORDS ARE FOR... HER!

TOMORROW NIGHT... WE SHALL MEET AGAIN!

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS CRAWL PAST ON LEADENED FEET. THEN, ALL AT ONCE, HER HEART IS BEATING LIKE THAT OF A HUNTED FAUN. THE CHIMES OF THE HOTEL DE VILLE RING OUT THE HOUR OF EIGHT. THERE IS A TAP ON HER DOOR...

CAR WAITING FOR YOU OUTSIDE THE MAIN ENTRANCE, MA'AM.

OH...! THANK YOU.



THERE IS SIMPLY THE WHISPER OF THE WAVES AND THE LILTING NOTES OF AN ORCHESTRA IN A FAR-OFF BALLROOM, AS SHE ALIGHTS BY THE YACHT OF "THE TRAVELLER."

NOT A SOUL ON BOARD, NO SAILORS... NO ONE.



IN THE VAST SALOON, SHE FINDS... HIM!

YOU CAME!

YOU KNEW I WOULD!



NOTHING ABOUT ME... OR ABOUT MY SHIP... SURPRISES YOU, I KNEW YOU WERE NOT A CREATURE OF THIS WORLD!

AND I SENSED THAT YOU WERE... DIFFERENT!



THERE IS HORROR IN THE HEART OF THE LOVELY DRAKULONNE! NOT EVEN WHEN A HAND MATERIALIZES AND GIVES HER A DRINK.







TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.

I AM A GAMBLER. I WAS ALWAYS A GAMBLER...



"ONE NIGHT, I STAKED MY ALL ON THE TURN OF A CARD. MY FORTUNE, MY LOVED ONE, MY HONOR. AND LOST!"



MY ONLY REGRET IS THAT I SHALL NEVER FEEL **THE CARDS** BETWEEN MY FINGERS AGAIN, NOR HEAR THE CLICK OF **DICE** AND THE ROLL OF A **ROULETTE WHEEL**...



I SHALL MISS NOTHING ELSE ON EARTH! TO KEEP THOSE THINGS, I WOULD **BARTER MY ETERNAL SOUL**!

THEY DINED...

YOU'LL BEAT KRUGER TONIGHT? HE DESERVES IT. HE DROVE A FOOLISH YOUNG MAN TO A HORRIBLE DEATH! AND THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT OTHER **EVIL** HE'S DONE. THE STENCH OF **DECAYING ROTTENNESS** HANGS OVER HIM!

I'LL BEAT HIM... FOR **YOUR SAKE, VAMPIRELLA!**



I SHALL SAIL THE WORLD OVER, TILL THE END OF TIME, INDULGING MY **OBSESSION**. ALREADY I HAVE GAINED...AND LOST...UNCOUNTED FORTUNES! YOU SEE, MY DEAR, THE WISH I EXPRESSED ON THAT MISSISSIPPI RIVER BOAT ALL THOSE YEARS AGO WAS **GRANTED!**

YOU MEAN...?





THEY ARRIVE TOGETHER  
AT THE CASINO.

BY COURTESY OF THE  
CASINO DIRECTORS, WE HAVE  
THE LOAN OF THIS TABLE AND ITS  
CROUPIER, FOR OUR PERSONAL  
USE. TONIGHT WE ARE  
NOT PLAYING AGAINST  
THE BANK, BUT  
AGAINST EACH  
OTHER!

EXPLAIN YOUR  
GAME.

WE PLAY RED AGAINST  
BLACK, AT EVEN ODDS, A  
HUNDRED THOUSAND  
FRANCS A SPIN. THE LOSER  
HAS TO **DOUBLE** HIS FOLLOW-  
ING STAKE. THE FIRST TO  
LOSE HIS FORTUNE...OR HIS  
NERVE...IS THE LOSER  
OF THE GAME!

I WILL  
PLAY ON  
**RED!**

AND I ON  
**BLACK!**

THE WHEEL SPINS. THE BALL  
COMES DOWN ON A **RED**  
NUMBER.

PITY! NOW  
I DOUBLE MY  
STAKE...**TWO**  
HUNDRED THOUSAND  
FRANCS!

RED COMES UP AGAIN...AND AGAIN...AND AGAIN! KRUGER'S  
STAKE ROCKETS UP IN MATHEMATICAL PROPORTION... 400,000  
FRANCS... 800,000 FRANCS... 1,600,000 FRANCS!

THE NEWS SPREADS LIKE A FOREST FIRE THROUGHOUT THE CASINO,  
OUT INTO THE NIGHT STREETS AND THROUGH THE THROBBING TOWN!  
THE LAWS OF CHANCE AND PROBABILITY HAVE, FOR AN INCALCULABLE  
TIME, BEEN SUSPENDED! THERE'S A **RUN OF RED!**



NEVER IN THE LONG AND BIZARRE HISTORY  
OF THE CASINO HAVE SUCH STAKES BEEN  
ON THE GREEN SAIZE

JABEZ! YOU  
CAN'T DO ON

LIKE THIS! YOU'VE SUNK  
OVER SIX MILLION  
FRANCS!

SHUT  
YOUR MOUTH,  
WOMAN!

RED HAS NOW COME UP SEVEN TIMES IN  
SUCCESSION...EIGHT...NINE...

PLAYING  
AGAIN, KRUGER?

THE TENTH TIME THAT RED COMES UP, THE  
ARMS MAGNATE HAS LOST 51,200,000  
FRANCS!!

YOU HAVE  
BEATEN ME,  
TRAVELLER...

I...I'M  
RUINED!

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING  
LEFT TO STAKE, IN ONE  
MORE SPIN OF THE WHEEL,  
AGAINST YOUR LOSSES?

YES! YES,  
BY ALL THE  
DEVILS IN HELL,  
I HAVE!

I STAKE  
HER!

AAAAAAH!  
NO! NO...YOU  
CAN'T MEAN  
IT!

I ACCEPT  
THE STAKE!  
SPIN THE WHEEL,  
CROUPIER!



THE RUNNING RED CONTINUES... FOR THE ELEVENTH TIME

COME, MY DEAR. TIME FOR US TO LEAVE HERE.

WHAT... WHAT ABOUT HER?

KEEP HER, KRUGER, WITH MY COMPLIMENTS! SHE WILL MAKE AN ADMIRABLE COMPANION IN YOUR NEW-FOUND POVERTY!

DROGA...

GO AFTER HIM! GET HIM... CUT HIM... DESTROY HIM!

GOOD BYE, KRUGER... SAVE A PLACE FOR ME IN HELL!

AAAAAAAH!

YOU SOLD ME... SOLD ME LIKE A SLAVE! HE WON ME... AND HE THREW ME BACK AT YOU LIKE A WORN-OUT GLOVE! YOU LET THIS HUMILIATION HAPPEN TO ME!!

E-E-E-E-AAAAAH

WALKING BACK TO THE **TRAVELLER'S** YACHT, THROUGH THE MIMOSA-SCENTED NIGHT...

KRUGER'S FINISHED FOR-  
EVER NOW, AND  
THE WORLD'S A  
CLEANER  
PLACE.

I ENJOYED THE  
EXPERIENCE. I ENJOYED  
PLEASING YOU AND DOING  
THE WORLD A GOOD TURN.  
HEDONISM ISN'T  
ENOUGH...



THE BEAUTIFUL DRAKULONNE, WHO CAN ONLY LIVE AS A NORMAL WOMAN BY DRINKING **BLOOD-SUBSTITUTE** SERUM EVERY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, IS IN REALITY A **SHE-VAMPIRE!** NORMALLY SATIATED BY THE SERUM, HER **BLOOD-LUST** BREAKS THROUGH IN TIMES OF **EXTREME STRESS!**

THOSE CARRION  
ARE ACTING ON  
KRUGER'S ORDERS!

... I WILL DRAIN  
THEM DRY!



NO ETERNITY  
OF SELF-INDULGENCE  
FOR ME NOW, MY  
VAMPIRELLA!

ARE YOU  
ALL RIGHT,  
TRAVELLER?

ANSWER ME,  
MY LOVE...

OOOOOOH!

NEVER MIND THE  
DAME! **GET HIM!**



THE FANGS OF THE **VAMPIRESS** REND THROUGH PULSATING JUGULARS! THE RICH, RED BLOOD FLOWS STRONGLY!

EEEEEEFH...!



THE TRAVELLER'S WOUNDS ARE DEEP-AND **FATAL!**

IT... IT  
CAN'T  
BE!







ONE LAST  
KISS... TO SEE  
ME ON MY WAY.  
THEN... HELP  
ME TO MY  
YACHT...

THE TOUCH OF **MORTALITY** IS ALREADY IMPRINTED  
ON THE FEATURES OF THE **TRAVELLER**.



WHY... WHY?

I BARTERED MY SOUL  
FOR THE SAKE OF AN  
OBSESSION. TONIGHT I  
GAMBLERED FOR REASONS  
OTHER THAN SELF-  
INDULGENCE. I HAVE  
BROKEN MY HALF OF  
THE BARGAIN... AND  
I MUST TRAVEL ON...



NOT...  
MUCH...  
TIME...

THE MAN WHO WAVES TO HER FROM THE DECK IS ALREADY  
A **WALKING DEAD MAN!**



AS THE VESSEL GLIDES SILENTLY AWAY INTO THE NIGHT, FLAMES  
BEGIN TO LICK AT THE SUPERSTRUCTURE. WHAT IS LEFT OF THE MAN  
WHOM VAMPIRELLA KNEW AND BRIEFLY LOVED IS HEADING OUT TO  
SEA FOR A **VIKING'S FUNERAL!**



GOOD-BYE...  
MAY YOU FIND  
PEACE...

SCREAMING YOUR HEAD OFF BECAUSE YOU'RE MISSING...

# VAMPIRELLA

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VAMPI #2  
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#1904  
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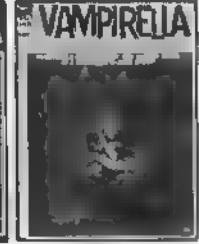
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VAMPI #5  
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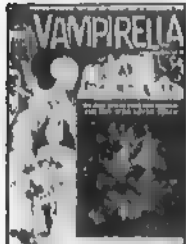
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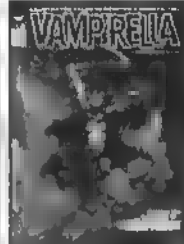
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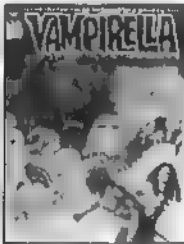
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VAMPI #19  
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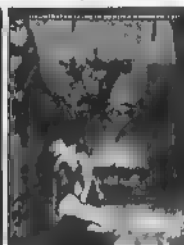
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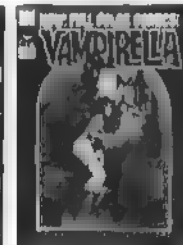
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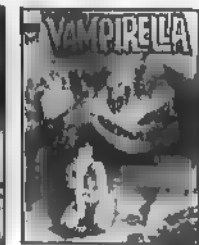
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THOSE MISSING ISSUES NOW!**

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# PANTHER



A PANTHER... FREE, BLACK  
AND DEADLY, RACES THROUGH  
THE VICIOUS JUNGLE KNOWN  
AS NEW YORK CITY!

IT LEAPS FROM THE ROTTING,  
CROOKED STEPS OF A SLUM  
TENEMENT!... THE TENEMENT  
WHERE IT JUST MURDERED  
TWO AGED AND SLOVENLY  
PEOPLE.



# BLACK ON WHITE



SOME MAY HAVE  
SEEN THE PANTHER...  
INCONGRUOUS WITH  
IT'S SETTING, RACING  
THROUGH TWISTED  
STREETS AND ALLEYS!

BUT NONE OBSERVE NOW...  
NOW AS THE GLISTENING BLACK  
ANIMAL TRANSFORMS INTO  
AN EVEN DEADLIER AND MORE  
DANGEROUS BEAST...



ONE WHO SAW THE PANTHER PURSUED ... UNTIL HE COULD KEEP UP NO LONGER ...

DAMN I LOST HER!

AND I'LL NEVER FIND HER AGAIN! NOT IF SHE DOESN'T WANT ME TO!

BUT IT WAS HER! I'M SURE IT WAS!

THAT GIANT CAT IS REALLY A GIRL!

THE SAME GIRL I SAW IN A NIGHT-CLUB!

AND NOW I DO BELIEVE!

TOO MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE THEN FOR THIS TO ALL BE JUST A COINCIDENCE!

THE OLD MAN I MET THERE TOLD ME OF HER ABILITY TO TRANSFORM INTO A PANTHER! I DIDN'T BELIEVE HIM!

THE BEGINNING: AT FIRST, HE HAD BEEN TRANSFIXED... HIS ATTENTION COMPLETELY CAPTURED BY HER HARD AND UNCOMPROMISING SENSUAL BEAUTY...

HE FELT AS THOUGH HE WERE BEING PULLED TOWARD HER... AN IMAGINED UNION FOLLOWED...



... A UNION WHICH WAS SUDDENLY SHATTERED BY AN OLD MAN AND A STORY THAT SEEMED BUT AN ELABORATE LIE ...

I'M TELLING YOU! SHE'S MORE THAN JUST A WOMAN! YEARS AGO, SHE LEFT A BAR WITH A MAN I KNEW! AND WHEN THAT MAN'S BODY WAS FOUND...

A RATHER MEANINGLESS EVENING OF AIMLESS FRIVOLITY... OR SO IT WOULD HAVE SEEMED, HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE NEWS ITEM HE READ THAT...

GOD... IT'S THE SAME OLD GUY...

... FOUND TORN TO SHREDS ... AS THOUGH BY SOME SORT OF HUGE CAT!







WHAT AM I DOING OUT HERE?

GOTTA LEARN TO CONTROL THE BEAST IN ME A BIT BETTER THAN THIS.

LEFT MY CLOTHES, MY SUITCASE MY MONEY... EVERYTHING BACK AT THE PLACE!

GOTTA GET BACK THERE... AND FAST... BEFORE SOMEBODY SPOTS ME LIKE THIS!



EVEN AS HE WAS RE-READING THAT NEWS ITEM THERE IN THAT SLEAZY DINER, HE HAD LOOKED UP, AND...

WHA!? IT'S HER!



HE HAD RUSHED OUT, AND, TRYING TO FOLLOW, FINALLY LOST HER! NOW HE WALKS AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE CONCRETE CANYONS, PAST GLITTERING AND BLINKING NEON, LOST IN THOUGHT...

I SUPPOSE I COULD GO TO THE POLICE WITH MY STORY! BUT THEY'D PROBABLY JUST LAUGH AT ME, LIKE I DID WITH THAT OLD GUY!

BESIDES, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HER NAME...



LAUGH? NO, PROBABLY NOT! THE POLICE WOULD VERY PROBABLY BE TRULY INTERESTED IN HIS STORY, FOR THE OLD MAN'S DEATH WAS ONLY THE FIRST! THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER GRISLY MURDERS SINCE THEN! ONLY TWO OF WHICH THE POLICE HAVE YET TO LEARN ABOUT...

...AN ELDERLY, SLOVENLY COUPLE, TORN APART LYING IN POOLS OF THEIR OWN BLOOD... AND THE SHADOW OF A LITHE AND WELL-ROUNDED FEMALE FORM FALLING OVER THIS SCENE OF WELL-DESERVED DEATH...

THERE! GOT 'EM!

NOW I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE! THERE WAS A DRUNK IN THE HALLWAY WHEN I KILLED THE OLD LADY! AND HE SAW ME DO IT!

I DOUBT IT, BUT HE MAY HAVE GONE TO THE POLICE!

EVERYTHING GOT SHOVED AROUND DURING THE STRUGGLE! NEED MY CLOTHES... MY PURSE...

SOON

STRANGE HOW MUCH MY LIFE HAS CHANGED THESE PAST FEW DAYS!

I'VE FINALLY STARTED TO FIGHT BACK...



...AGAINST EVERYONE WHO HAS EVER PUSHED ME AROUND!

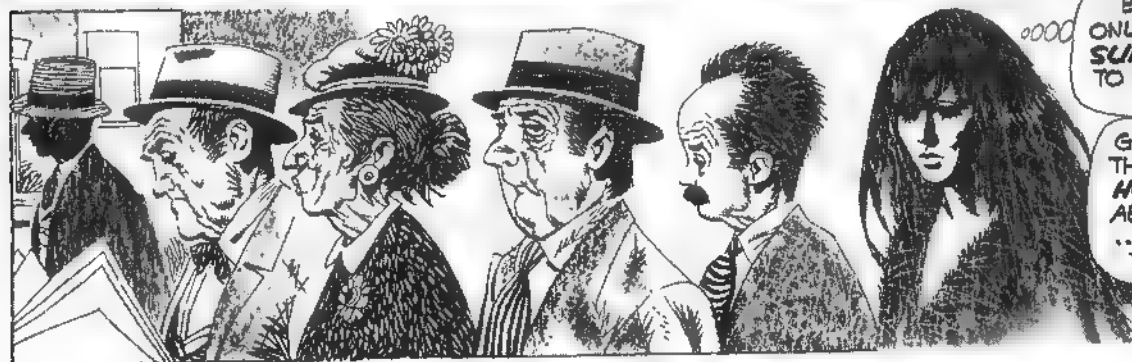
AND MORE THAN THAT, I'VE BECOME AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PERSON!

I'M STRONG NOW... AND I'VE LEARNED THAT I'VE ALWAYS HAD THE CAPACITY TO BE STRONGER THAN ANYONE WHO FEELS LIKE KICKING ME AROUND!



BUT SO FAR, I'VE ONLY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE! I'VE GOT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS!

GOT TO RETURN TO THAT FOUNDLING HOME, AND LEARN ABOUT MY ANCESTRY... LEARN WHY I'M THE WAY I AM!





TO LEARN THE **WHOLE** STORY... A STORY THAT RESIDES IN A SUBURBAN **FOUNDLING HOME**... THIS IS YOUR **GOAL!** SO WHY THEN, **PANTHA**, DO YOU NOW SUDDENLY FEEL COMPELLED TO **LEAVE** THE TICKET LINE?



WHY DO YOU FEEL **DRAWN** INTO MOMENTARILY PLACING YOUR BELONGINGS IN A LOCKER?



WHY IS A CERTAIN SUBCONSCIOUS PART OF YOU DIRECTING YOU TO WALK OUT OF THE BUS STATION... TO STEAL OFF INTO THE NEON-SPLASHED **NIGHT?** WHY **PANTHA?** WHY? THERE ARE NO ANSWERS HERE... NO **ANSWERS** ON THIS CHILLY CITY NIGHT!



... BUT NOT TOO FAR AWAY, WE FIND **ANOTHER** WHO IS SEARCHING...



HAVE NO IDEA WHY I **CAME** HERE! I KNOW THE CHANCES OF HER BEING HERE WERE **SLIM**, WHAT WITH ME SEEING HER WALKING ALONG WITH THAT **SUITCASE!**



AND I CAN'T REALLY **ASK** AROUND ABOUT HER...

THESE PLACES ARE RUN BY THE **SYNDICATE**... OR SO I **HEAR!** IT DOESN'T **PAY** TO ASK QUESTIONS IN PLACE LIKE **THIS!**

EXCUSE ME, SIR...

A **WOMAN**... NO, MORE A **GIRL**... EIGHTEEN OR NINETEEN... A PIECE OF OVER-OBVIOUS **BEAUTY** WHO HAD JUST ENOUGH TO **DRINK** SO THAT HER **TOP-HEAVINESS** WAS GETTING THE **BEST** OF HER... SPEAKING IN A LOW, NOT **SULTRY** BUT **WHISPERY**, VOICE.

PARDON?

I HATE TO **BROTHER** YOU, SIR! BUT THIS IS PART OF MY **JOB!** I'M SUPPOSED TO COME OVER AND GET YOU TO BUY ME A **DRINK!**



HUNH?

EACH OF US  
GIRLS HAVE TO GO  
AROUND LIKE THIS  
AT LEAST **ONCE A  
WEEK** AND GET  
THE MEN TO BUY  
US DRINKS. I  
KNOW I'M  
**RIPPING YOU  
OFF, BUT...**

YOU MEAN YOU  
**WORK HERE?** AS  
A **DANCER?**

YES!  
BUT...

LISTEN... I COULD JUST SAY THAT YOU  
**REFUSED TO BUY ME A DRINK.** AND  
THAT'LL BE **THAT!** AFTER ALL THIS IS  
A FANTASTIC  
**RIP-OFF AND...**

**NO! NO!**  
**SIT DOWN!**  
I'LL BUY YOU  
THAT DRINK... IF  
I CAN TALK TO  
YOU FOR A  
WHILE!

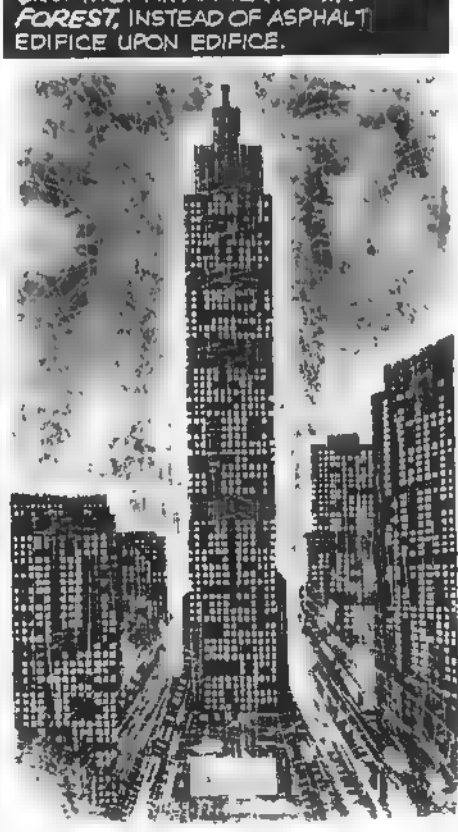
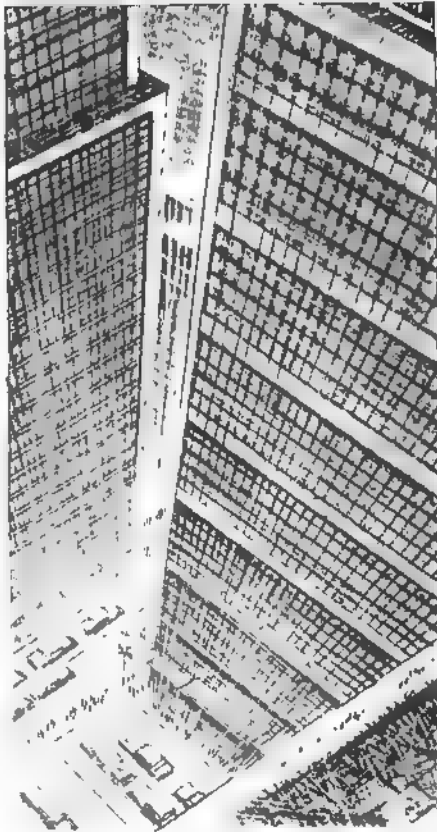
THERE'S THIS  
GIRL I'M INTERESTED  
IN FINDING OUT A FEW  
THINGS ABOUT. SHE  
WORKS HERE!

OR AT  
LEAST, SHE WAS  
HERE **LAST  
NIGHT!**

LISTEN, PEOPLE OF THE NIGHT... CAN  
YOU **HEAR IT?**... HEAR IT IN YOUR  
**MIND?** THE **VIBRATIONS!** THE  
DISTANT BEAT OF **JUNGLE DRUMS!**

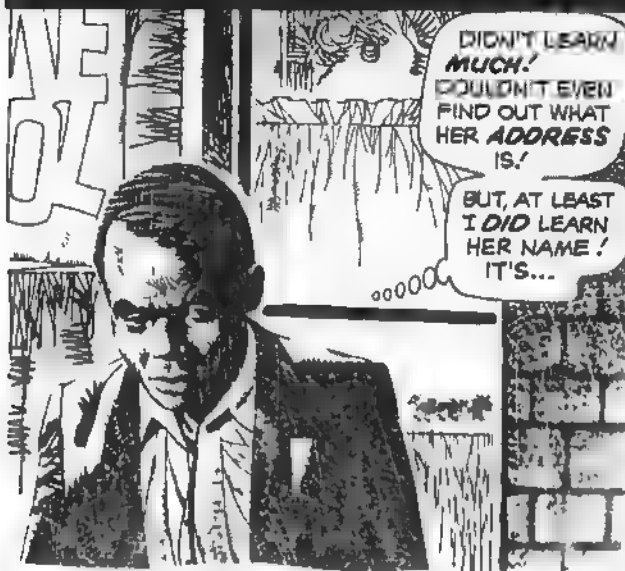
DO YOU HEAR THE RUSTLE OF  
**FOLIAGE** ... THAT RUMBLING  
**GROWL?** CAN YOU HEAR THE PAD  
OF THE PAWS OF A **HUGE CAT?**

THIS IS A **JUNGLE OF CONCRETE!**  
YET IT IS AS THOUGH THE OIL AND  
THE SLUDGE ON THE STREETS WERE  
NOW REFLECTING THE DENSE  
GROWTH OF AN **AFRICAN RAIN  
FOREST,** INSTEAD OF ASPHALT  
EDIFICE UPON EDIFICE.





WHAT DO THESE VIBRATIONS *MEAN*? IS THIS TO  
BECOME A NIGHT OF JUNGLE *MADNESS*?



BUT WHAT NEED DO WE  
HAVE TO KNOW THE NAME  
SHE GOES BY IN THIS  
PARTICULAR *NEIGHBORHOOD*?  
WE ALREADY KNOW HER  
FOR WHO SHE TRULY IS.



HE SENSES IMPENDING *DOOM*.  
HE CANNOT *SHAKE* THE FEELING...



...NOT EVEN WHEN THERE ARE  
*OTHERS... MANY OTHERS*  
AROUND HIM...



...FOR EVEN IN A CROWD, HE IS  
*ALONE... FEELING SOMETHING*  
STALKING HIM...



UNTIL, FINALLY, IT  
IS MORE THAN JUST A  
*FEELING... NOW*  
THERE ARE *SOUNDS*  
AS WELL. WHAT WAS  
ONCE JUST A HAZY  
IMPRESSION HAS  
BECOME SHOCKING  
*REALITY!*



THE **FEAR**... IT BEGINS  
DEEP **WITHIN** YOU, DOESN'T  
IT? **FEAR**... **GROWING**,  
SPREADING FURTHER AND  
FURTHER OUT...



...UNTIL IT CONSUMES YOUR **ENTIRE**  
**BEING**... AND YOU ARE NO LONGER A  
RATIONAL, THINKING CREATURE. NOW  
YOUR **INSTINCTS** HAVE TAKEN OVER...



...TELLING YOU TO RUN **FASTER, FASTER**... AS  
STRANGE **IMAGES** FLASH THROUGH YOUR **MIND**...

**BOOMLAY**



**BOOMLAY**



...AND WHEN **RUNNING** PROVES **USELESS**... WHEN  
YOU INSTINCTIVELY REALIZE THAT THERE SHALL BE  
**NO ESCAPE**... THEN YOU PREPARE FOR THE **FIGHT**,  
JUST AS YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR SIMILAR FIGHTS  
FOR CENTURY UPON **CENTURY**...



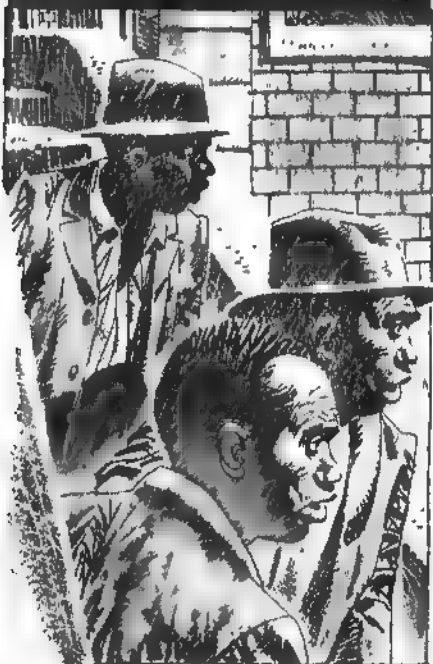
...POSITIONING YOURSELF...  
WAITING...  
**WAITING**...



...AND FINALLY STRIKING!



LISTEN, PEOPLE OF THE NIGHT... CAN YOU HEAR IT? THE GROWLS! THE SHRIEKS!



THE SOUND OF CLAWS TEARING INTO FLESH... THE SKUFFLE... THE SCREAMS...



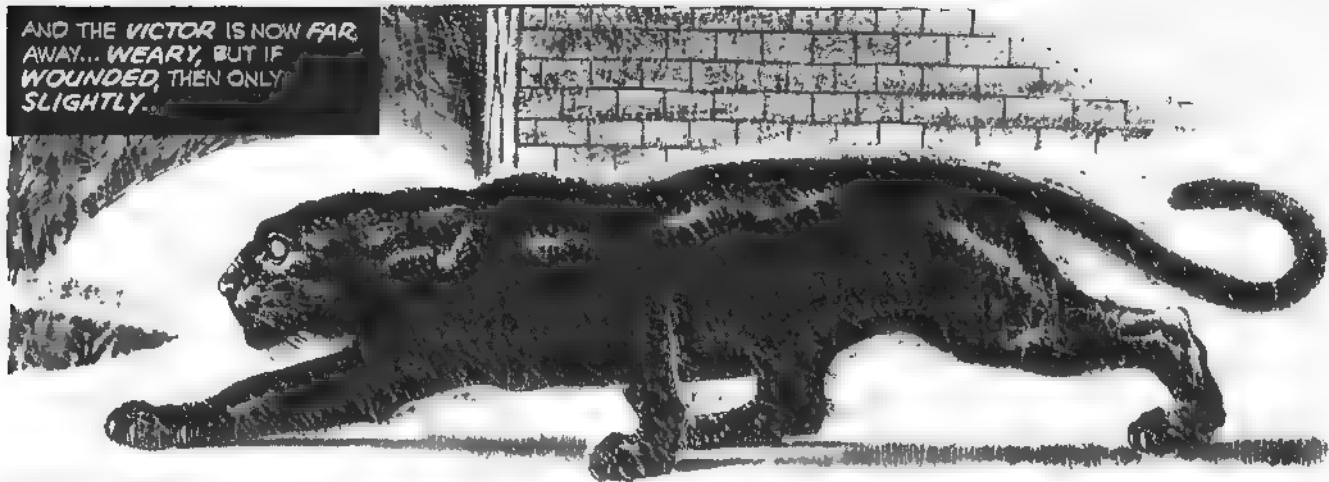
AND FINALLY... THE DEAFENING SILENCE!



IT IS OVER NOW! THE BATTLE HAS ENDED, AND YOU, MAN... YOU ARE THE LOSER!



AND THE VICTOR IS NOW FAR AWAY... WEARY, BUT IF WOUNDED, THEN ONLY SLIGHTLY.



BEFORE LONG, A **PANTHER** NUZZLES WHAT APPEARS TO BE A DISCARDED **DRESS**...



...IN CONTROL ENOUGH TO LEAVE MY BELONGINGS IN A **BUS STATION LOCKER**... SO THAT THEY TOO ARE SAFE!

NOW, I CAN **RETURN** TO THE **BUS STATION**... AND GET ON WITH PAYING A VISIT TO THAT **FOUNDLING HOME**!

AND, WITHIN SECONDS, THE CAT IS GONE, AND A **YOUNG WOMAN** HAS TAKEN ITS PLACE...

IT HAPPENED AGAIN! THAT **OTHER PART** OF ME TOOK OVER!

BUT, AT LEAST THIS TIME, I WAS **SOMEWHAT** IN CONTROL...

...IN CONTROL ENOUGH TO LEAVE MY CLOTHES IN A PLACE WHERE I COULD GET THEM BACK!



IT'S BEEN A **LONG DAY**! I COULD CERTAINLY USE A **MANICURE**! MY NAILS ARE A **MESS**!

AND SOME **REST**! I COULD SURE USE... SOME **SLEEP**!





# PRESENTING The 1973 WARREN AWARDS

## BEST COVER OF THE YEAR 1973

### SANJULIAN

Sanjulian was the best horror cover artist in the business when he came to Warren three years ago. But he's improved tremendously since then. When the Warren staff voted for Best Cover of 1973, the top three choices went to Sanjulian's excellent works.



## BEST ART OF THE YEAR 1973

### ESTEBAN MAROTO

Esteban Maroto is one of the fastest, most reliable, and most talented artists illustrating comics today. Almost everything he draws is excellent. But Esteban's contemporaries felt he surpassed himself with his beautiful "Scream in the Forest" from CREEPY #53.



Best covers of 1973: EERIE #48, CREEPY #51, EERIE #46.



Best Art In Story: "A Scream In The Forest"—CREEPY #53.

## BEST ARTIST/WRITER OF THE YEAR 1973

### RICHARD CORBEN

Rich Corben returned to the Warren magazines this year, after an all too long absence. He started off by thrilling us with "Mickey Click Flip." And from there jumped to writing, drawing and coloring "Lycan-klutz"... unanimously chosen best story written by an artist.



## BEST STORY OF THE YEAR 1973

### BILL DUBAY

This may have been the year of the Warren magazines. But it was Bill DuBay's year as well. Besides coping honors for scripting the best story to appear in a Warren magazine this year, Dube became both Editor and Vice President of Warren Pub. Company.



"Lycan-klutz": Reason why Rich Corben is Best Writer/Artist.



Best Story: "Freedom's Just Another Word"—CREEPY #53.

**T**raditionally, the end of any year is a time to look back. To reflect upon where we've been and what we've accomplished, before striving ahead to the advancing new year.

Looking back on 1973, the writers, artists and editorial staff of the Warren magazines can well feel a sense of proud accomplishment. No one in the comics industry can deny, that 1973 has been the year of the Warren magazines.

First we gave you covers from the two

all-time greatest horror cover artists, Enrich and Sanjulian. We followed up with bizarre stories from the eloquently warped minds of writers John Jacobson, Jack Butterworth and Doug Moench. We bombarded you with the illustrious illustrative works of Jose Gonzalez, Ramon Torrents, Esteban Maroto and Felix Mas. We sent you into freaky acidian worlds of color with Richard Corben. And we gave you posters, games, more stories and more pages of horror than ever be-

fore.

The year 1973 saw the introduction of new Warren stars. The Mummy debuted with oldtimers Jaime Brocal and Steve Skeates. Martin Salvador cavorted about with our new Werewolf. Paul Neary made his and Hunter's bow in EERIE. Vicente Alcazar splashed into the Warren magazines with Schreck. And a kid from Spain named Isidro Mones kept popping up in a lot of magazines with his name misspelled, Munes!

**T**he Warren Awards are an annual presentation, honoring the writers and artists who have consistently produced the absolute best stories and art during the past year. Traditionally, the Warren Award winners have been chosen by the editors and publisher of the three Warren magazines, CREEPY, EERIE and VAMPIRELLA. This year, however, both the writing and artistic staff were asked to participate in the selections. These then, the winners of the fourth annual Warren Awards, were selected by their fellow artists and writers as the most outstanding talent to appear in the Warren magazines during the year 1973.

## BEST ALL AROUND ARTIST RAMON TORRENTS

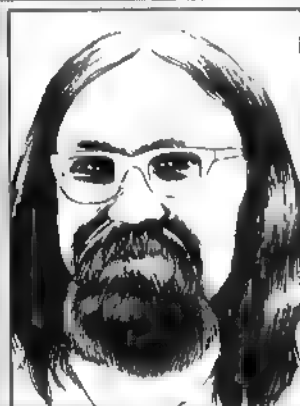
Ramon Torrents is a new Warren artist. His first work appeared in the early part of 1973. He hit us first with "Star Slaughter," "The Last Hero" and "Call It Companionship." All brought instant raves. And the Warren staff elected Ramon as most versatile artist.



"Star Slaughter" was Ramon Torrents' first for CREEPY.

## BEST ALL AROUND WRITER STEVE SKEATES

Earlier this year, Steve Skeates received an award from the Academy of Comic Book Arts for a story Warren had turned down, "Poster Plague." Now, his peers have chosen Steve as the Best All-Around Writer. It's been a good year for Steve with "Changes," "Middle-Am" and The Mummy.



"The Mummy": Only one reason why Steve Skeates is tops.

Oldtimers Carl Wessler, Reed Crandall and Tom Sutton returned to the Warren fold. While oldsters Adolfo Abellan and Fernando Fernandez found us for the first time.

This was the year artist Auraleon discovered he liked drawing women and panthers. While old reliable Jose Bea kept churning out classic after classic.

And while all this was going on, some warped kid up in Canada with a Bezaire name kept trying to sell us his art. We

bought some of his stories instead! And poor Budd Lewis down in Louisiana didn't get Moench credit at all for writing about his "Most Private Terror."

A productive year for sure. Lots of pages. Lots of art and stories. Lots of headaches for editor Bill DuBay and assistants Jim Stenstrom and Bill Mohalley. The first aid chest was stocked with Excedrin . . . while publisher James Warren basked in the sun-browned sand of the Bahamas, the Hamptons, and that

## SPECIAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING COVERS

## ENRICH

There seemed to be no Warren Award category for Enrich. But because of his enthralling VAMPIRELLA covers, he was voted this much-deserved Special Award. Enrich's talent for color and realism is surpassed by none. He is truly one of the world's best artists.



Enrich: Excellent color, excellent art, one of the world's best!

## SPECIAL AWARD FOR ALL-AROUND EXCELLENCE

## RICHARD CORBEN

Rich Corben is one hell of a talent. But to Warren Publishing he's much more than that. He's a guy you can rely on. Rich pours his heart into his work. He constantly gives more than 100% of himself. Rich, we thank you . . . for your talent, drive, and friendship.



What's said about a super-talent who gives all? Rich Corben!

wonderful vacationland on the Sinai.

But if you think 1973 was the year of Warren, you've got to be here for 1974. You'll be in good company with Jeff Jones, Neal Adams, John Severin and Frank Frazetta. We'll have a new magazine by Will Eisner. More stories by your old favorites. And the best illustrators this side of the comics field. Nineteen seventy three was our best year yet. But 1974 will be the year of the Warren magazines!



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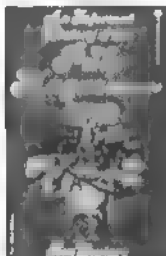
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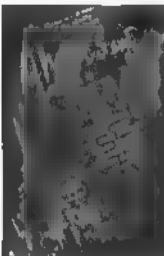
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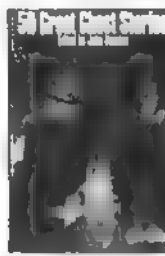
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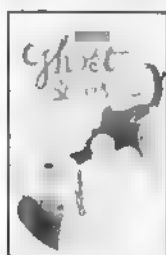
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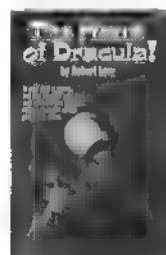
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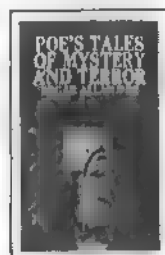
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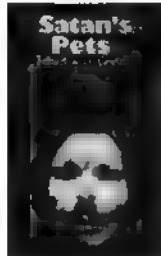
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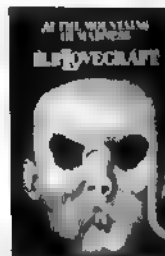
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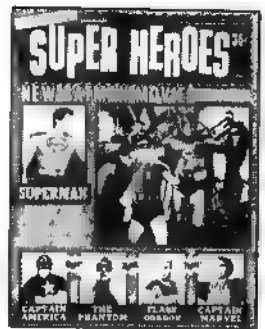
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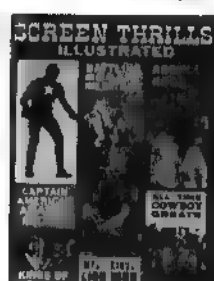
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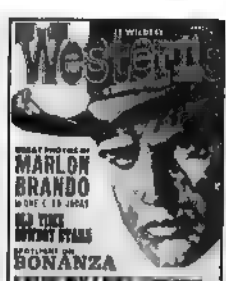
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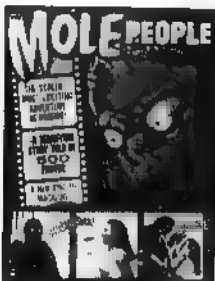
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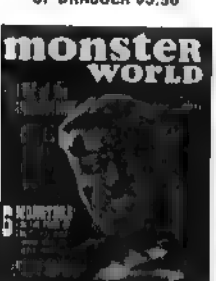
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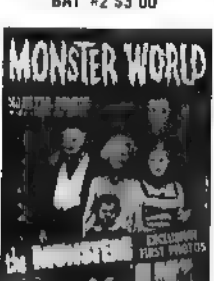
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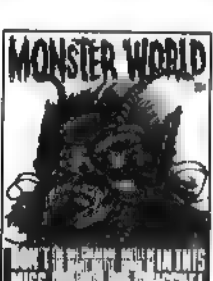
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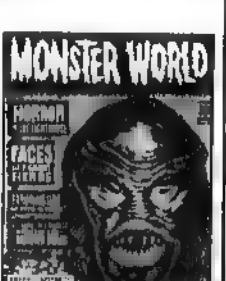
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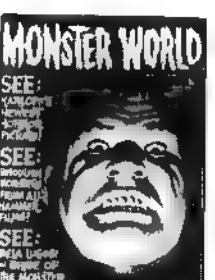
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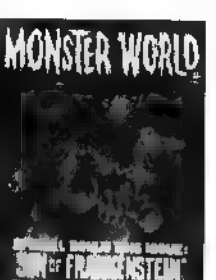
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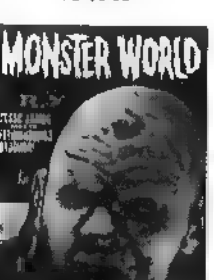
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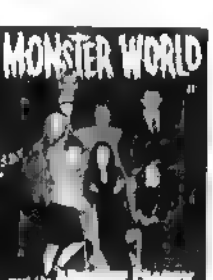
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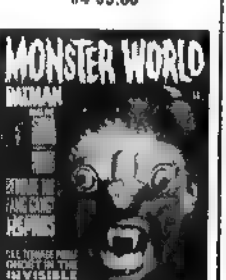
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# HARRY

JEFF JONES

ROSES ARE RED  
VIOLETS ARE BLUE...



DAWN ON THIS PARTICULAR DAY  
FOUND A SURPRISE AMONG THE  
LEAVES.



WE GOTTA  
GET GOING,  
HARRY.

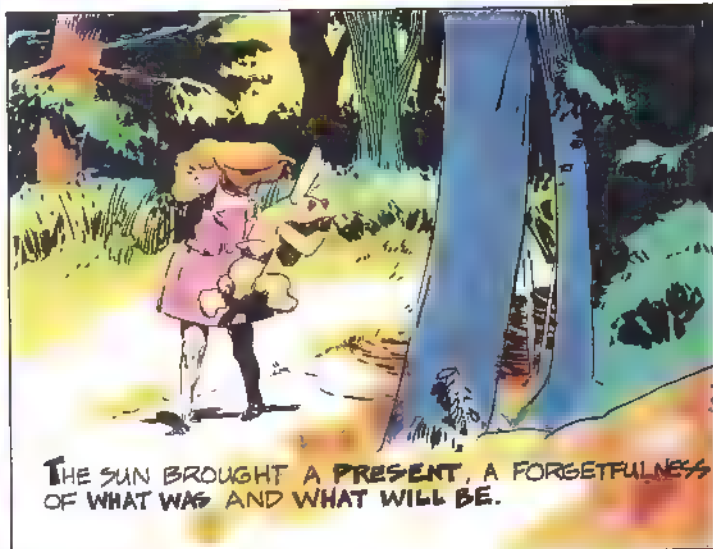
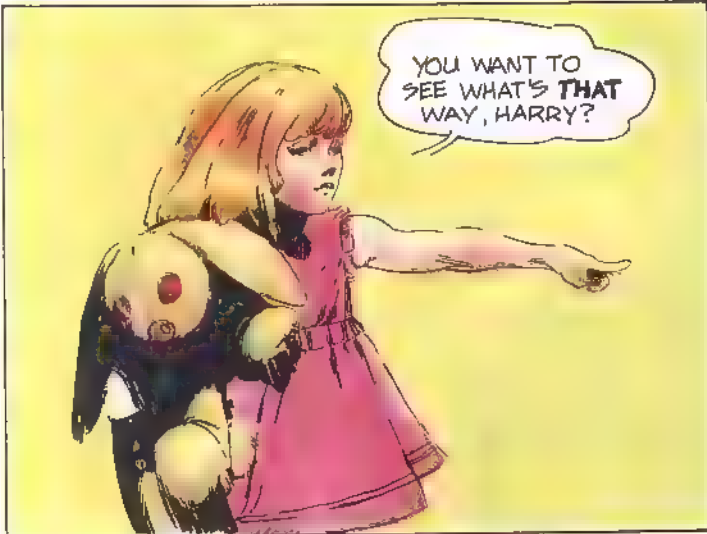


THE MORNING WAS ALIVE WITH BOUNDARY  
AND HUNGRY WITH CHANGE.

WE GOTTA FIND  
SOMETHING TO EAT.  
OH, HARRY, YOU'RE  
WET!  
I DON'T WANT TO  
GO BACK, EVER.  
RIGHT, HARRY?  
YOU'RE ALWAYS  
RIGHT.



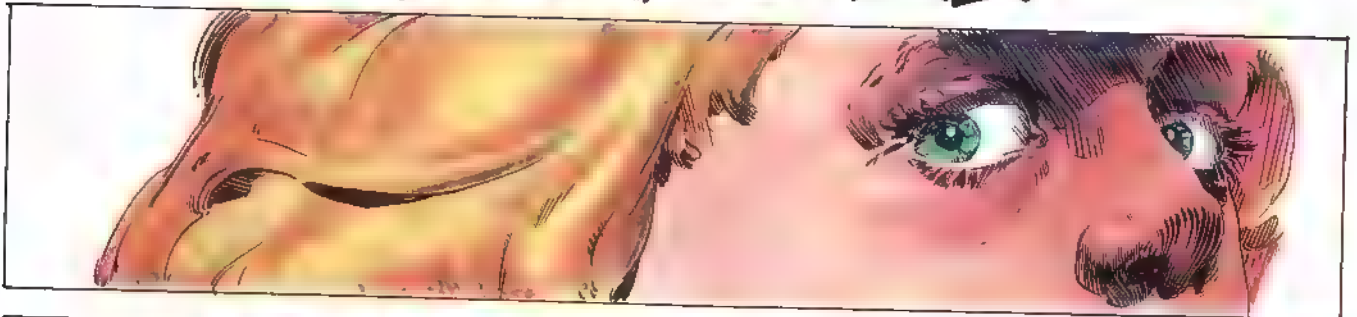
YOU WANT TO  
SEE WHAT'S **THAT**  
WAY, HARRY?



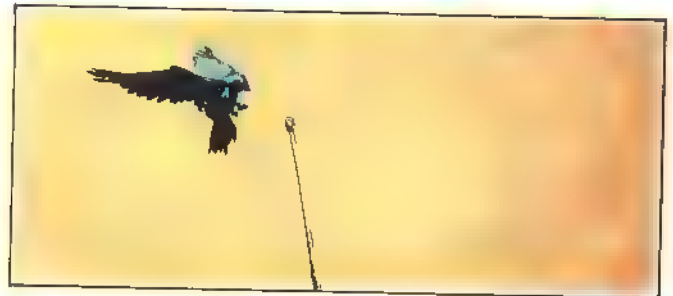
THE SUN BROUGHT A PRESENT, A FORGETFULNESS  
OF WHAT WAS AND WHAT WILL BE.



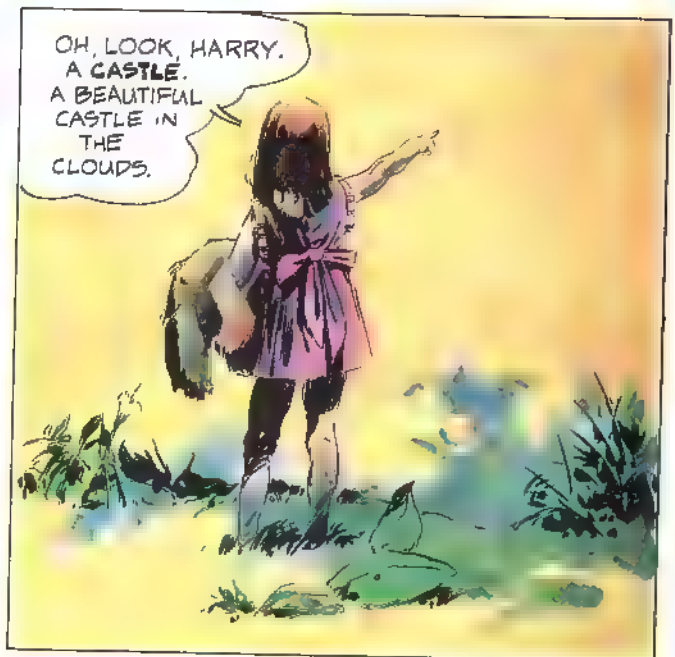
**AAAWWWKK!**



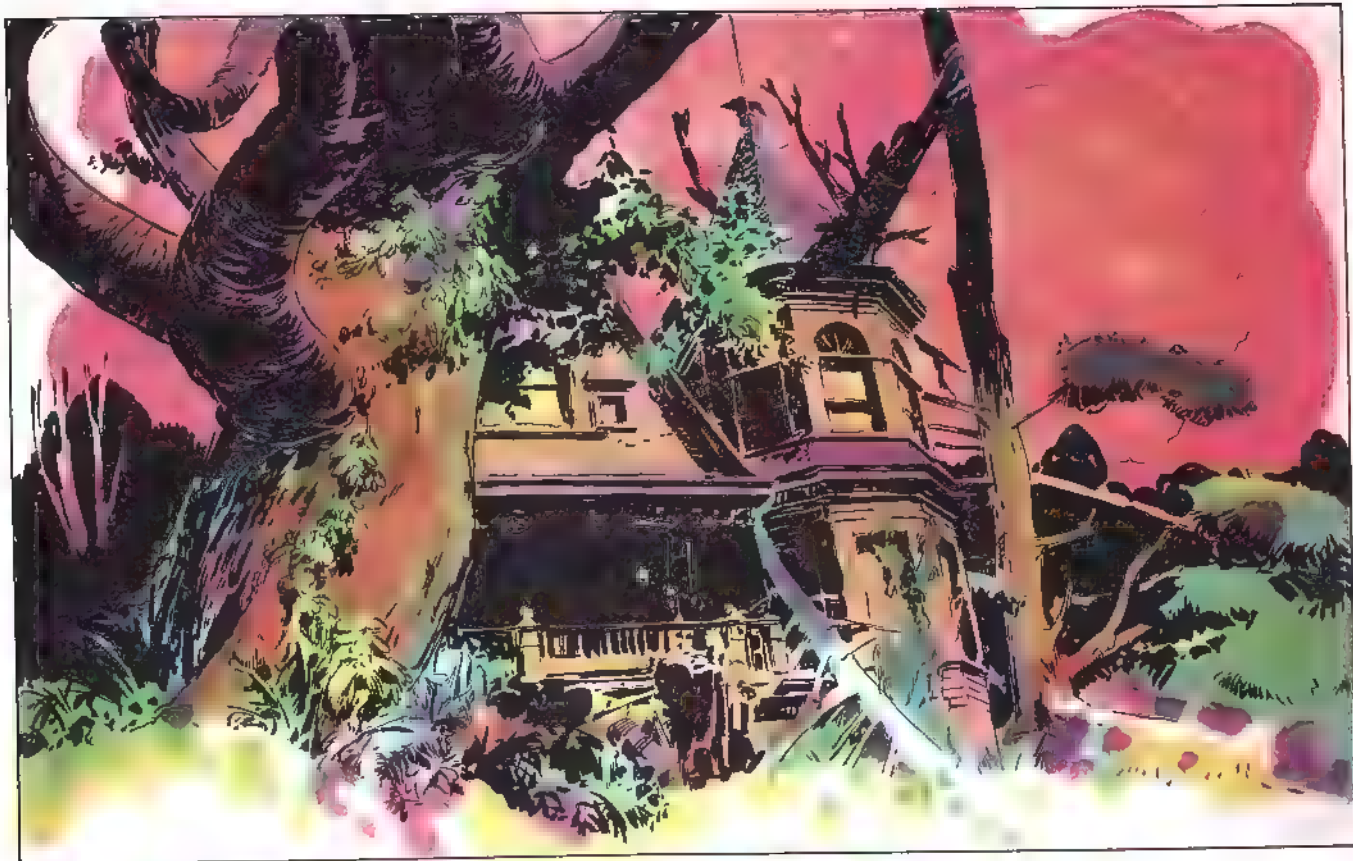
HARRY! WHAT  
WAS THAT!  
YOU HEAR IT,  
HARRY?



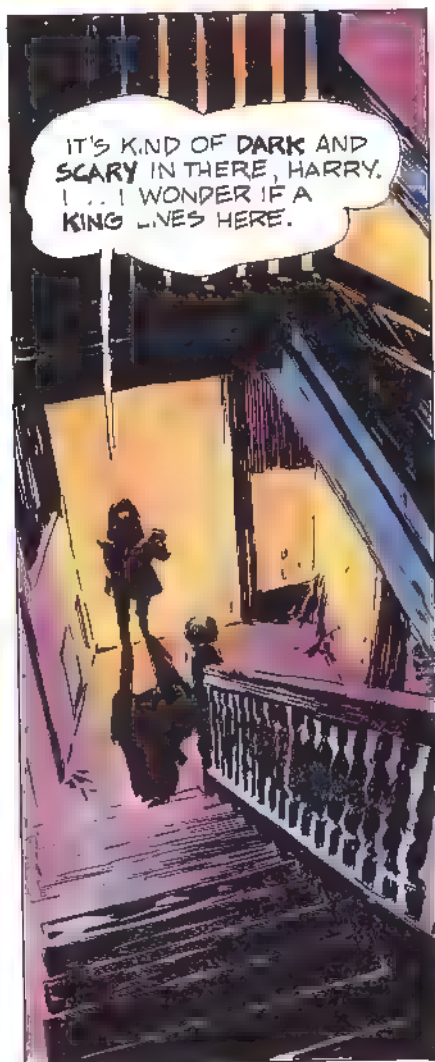
OH, LOOK, HARRY.  
A CASTLE.  
A BEAUTIFUL  
CASTLE IN  
THE  
CLOUDS.



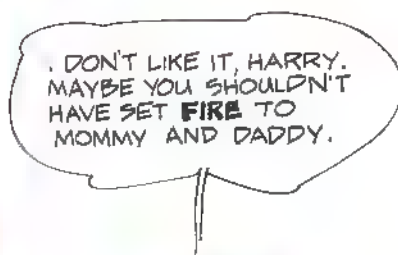




I NEVER SAW A  
CASTLE BEFORE.  
DID YOU, HARRY?  
YOU'VE SEEN  
EVERYTHING.



IT'S KIND OF DARK AND  
SCARY IN THERE, HARRY.  
I... I WONDER IF A  
KING LIVES HERE.



. DON'T LIKE IT, HARRY.  
MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T  
HAVE SET FIRE TO  
MOMMY AND DADDY.



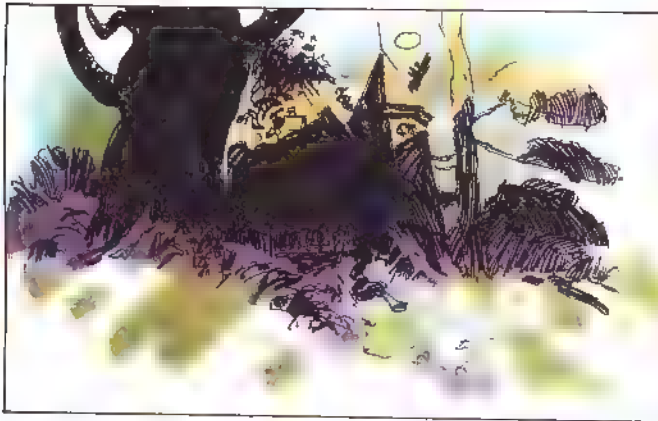




I ... I'M AFRAID,  
HARRY. I WAS  
NEVER AFRAID  
LIKE THIS BEFORE.  
EVEN DURING THE  
**FIRE**. THEY JUST  
DIDN'T UNDERSTAND  
YOU, HARRY



THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE  
THROWN YOU IN THE  
GARBAGE CAN AND GOT  
YOUR HEAD STAINED.

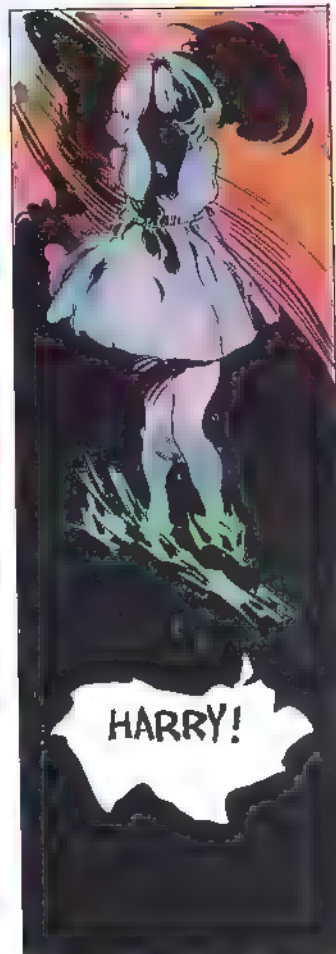
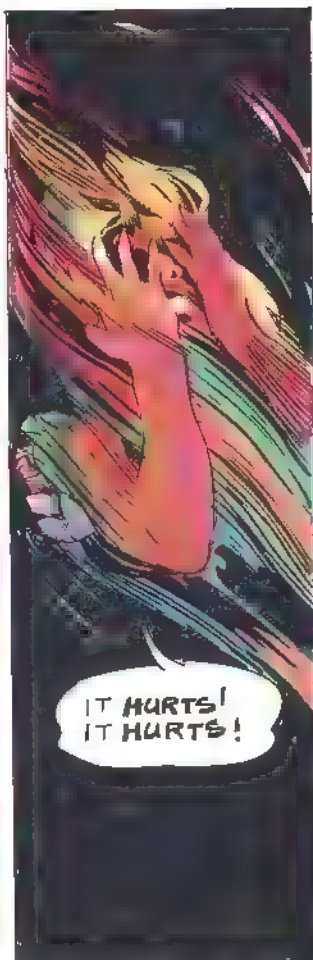
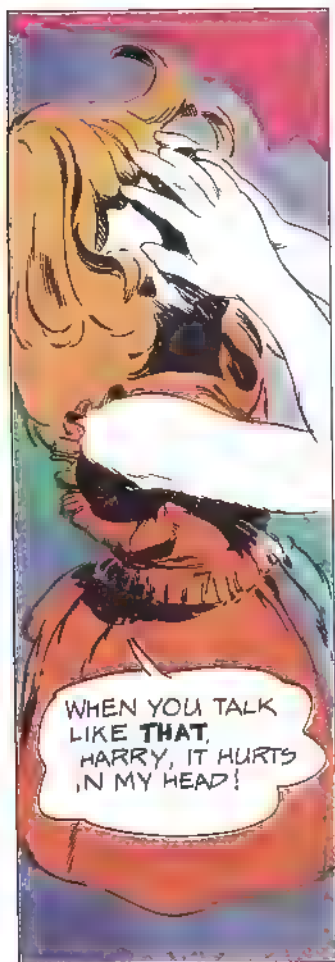


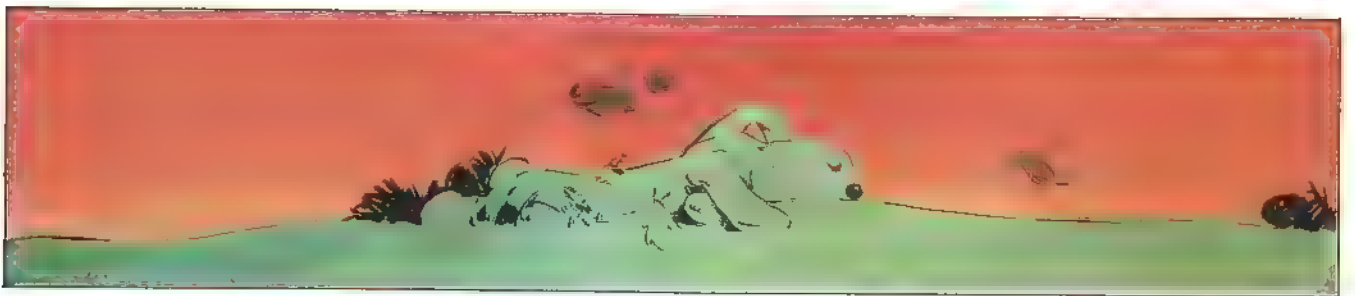
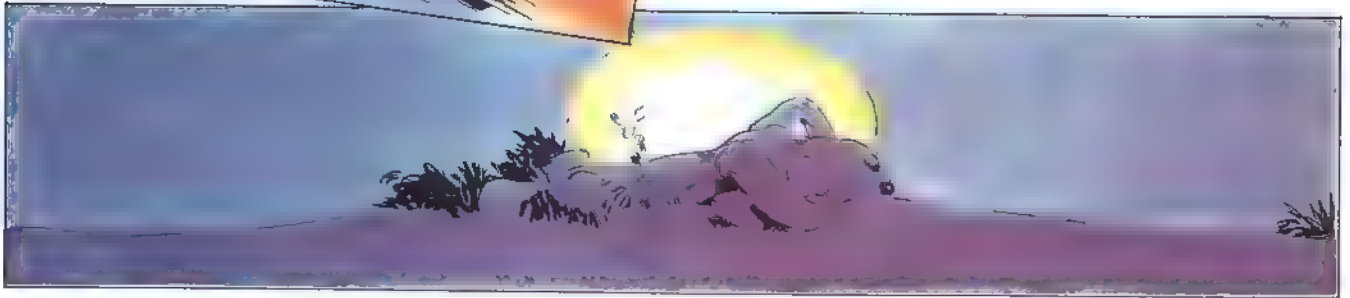
IT'S GOING  
TO BE  
GETTING DARK  
OUT THERE SOON,  
HARRY. I DON'T  
WANT TO SLEEP  
IN THE WOODS  
AGAIN.



MAYBE IF WE GO  
BACK AND TELL THE  
TRUTH — ABOUT THE  
GARBAGE CAN, HARRY.  
MAYBE THEY WON'T  
PUT YOU IN JAIL,  
THEN.









# DEAD RUIN

THE STARS WERE FADING  
AROUND HIM AND HE  
COULDN'T REMEMBER WHY.

AND NOW A TERROR WAS  
STALKING HIM AND CLOSING  
IN FAST. ALTHOUGH HE  
COULDN'T SEE IT YET, ITS  
CHOKING PRESENCE  
GRIPPED HIS CHEST.



BREATHLESSLY HE SLOWED TO ADJUST THE  
RUBBER AIR HOSE.



AND BACKED  
INTO A HOLE



HIS HEAD REELED AS HE GULPED AIR

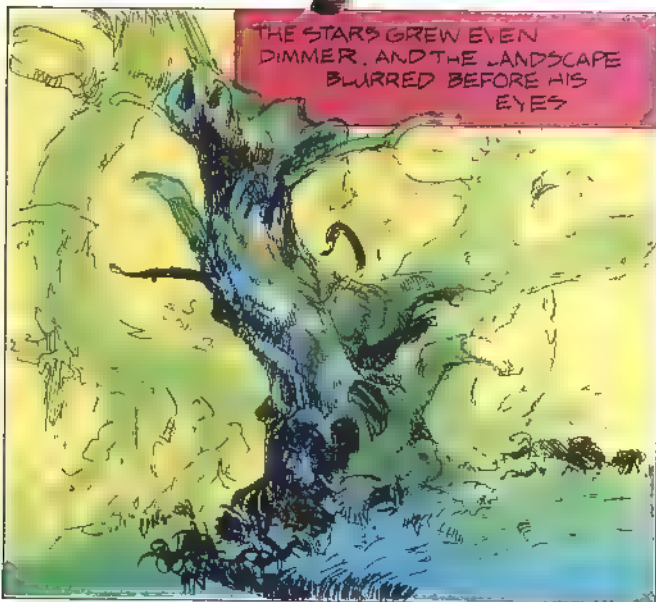


BUT IT  
WAS STILL  
THERE.

HE COULD TELL  
YOU THINGS  
ABOUT IT  
THAT WOULD  
MAKE YOUR  
BONES COLD,  
AND THINGS  
THAT WOULD  
TAKE YOUR  
BREATH  
AWAY

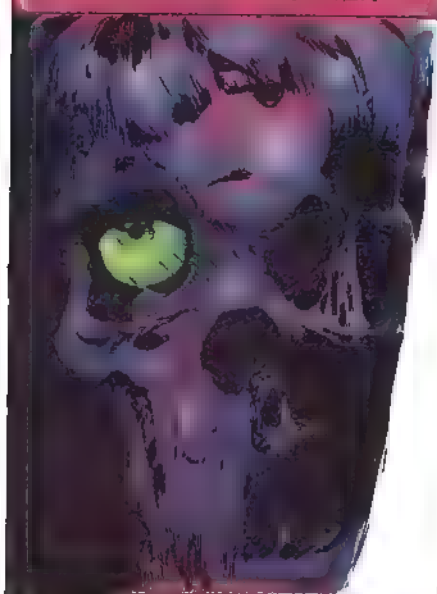


THE STARS GREW EVEN  
DIMMER, AND THE LANDSCAPE  
BLURRED BEFORE HIS  
EYES



AND NOW HE COULD GO NO FURTHER IN THE  
END IT WOULD ALWAYS SHOW ITSELF.

FINALLY COMING INTO VIEW—



NEV TABLY—

JUST AS HIS AIR  
RAN OUT.



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COUSIN EERIE

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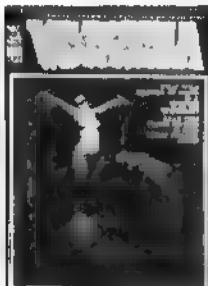


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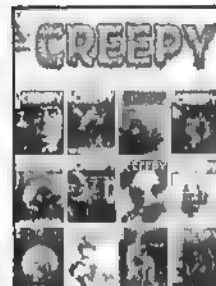
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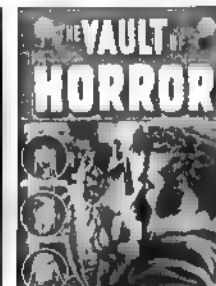
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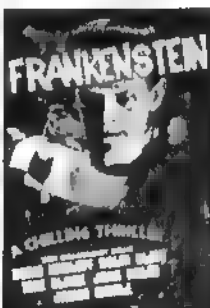
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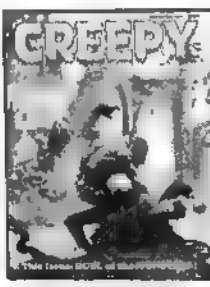
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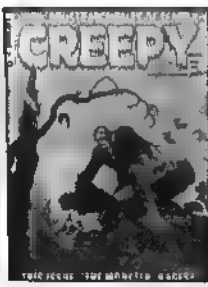
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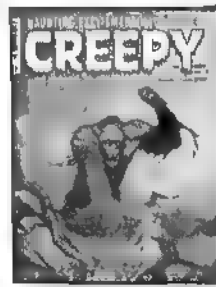
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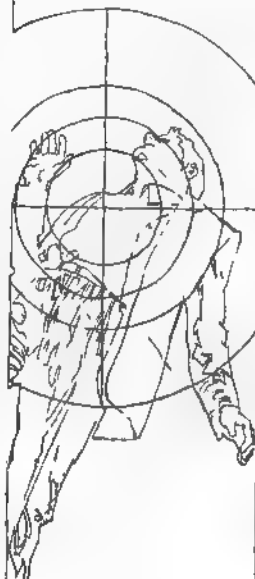
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# PROLOGUE

ANTONIO  
PUICELLI...

LUIS  
MARTINO...



DINO! BACK  
ALREADY? DID  
YOU FINISH  
YOUR BUSINESS  
IN SICILY?

MEN OF  
VENGEANCE...

MEN OF THE  
BROTHER-  
HOOD...

... MEN  
KILLED IN  
COLD BLOOD  
BY DINO  
ARMANI!

YES, JIMMIE! DOESN'T TAKE ME  
LONG TO DO SOMETHING ONCE I PUT  
MY MIND TO IT. BUT *YOU* KNOW THAT.  
I TOOK YOU *INTO* THIS BUSINESS...  
*TAUGHT* YOU EVERYTHING... GAVE  
YOU ANYTHING YOU *WANTED*...

YOU SHOULDN'T  
HAVE GOTTEN  
*GREEDY* WHILE  
I WAS GONE,  
JIMMIE!



ANGELA  
BELONGS TO  
ME, AND NO  
ONE ELSE.



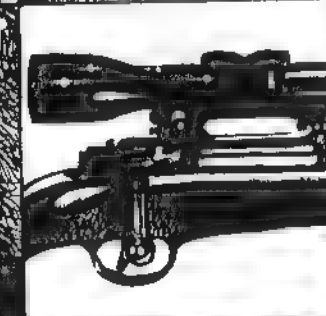
WHY?



WITNESS **DINO ARMANI**. PITILESS, CALCULATING, DEVOID OF MERCY OR COMPASSION! AN ALTOGETHER RARE SPECIE OF ANIMAL WHO **KILLS** WITHOUT EFFORT OR REMORSE.



HIGH INTELLIGENCE TO **CORRUPTION**. HE LIVES ON THE GREED OF HIS ENEMIES AND THE GUILT OF HIS VICTIMS. NOT SIMPLY A **LINK** IN THE ORGANIZATION BUT A **PRIME-MOVER**.



THE ARABS HAVE A WORD FOR HIM: **HASHHASHIN**. A SINGLE-TRACK MIND, CONSCIENCE ONLY DURING THE ACTION OF **MURDER** WITH **ONE PURPOSE TO KILL!**

*Belaudes*

SOME SAY SUCH A MAN COULD NOT **POSSIBLY** HAVE A **SOUL**. TO THAT EXTENT THEY CAME CLOSEST IN THEIR DESCRIPTION, FOR **DINO ARMANI** WAS, IN FACT...

# THE MAN WHOSE SOUL WAS SPOILING!

WHY DID YOU DO IT, ANGELA?

DINO! FOR GOD'S  
SAKE! WHERE DO  
YOU **GET** THESE  
CRAZY IDEAS? JIM-  
MIE MEANT **NOTHING**  
TO ME! YOU MUST  
**BELIEVE** THAT!

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN  
I COULDN'T **TRUST** YOU,  
ANGELA! WAS IT THAT  
**HARD** TO BE **FAITH-**  
**FUL** TO ME?

**ANSWER**  
ME, YOU SCUM!

DINO!  
**PLEASE!**  
I **HAVE** BEEN  
FAITHFUL TO YOU,  
I **SWEAR** IT!  
YOU'RE MAKING  
A **TERRIBLE**  
**MISTAKE!**

**DON'T DO**  
**IT, DINO!**

**BLAM!**  
**BLAM!**

MY MISTAKE  
WAS IN **TRUSTING**  
YOU, BABY. ALL THE  
YOUNG BULLS IN THE  
WORLD, AND YOU HAD  
TO PICK **JIMMIE**.  
HE WAS LIKE A KID  
BROTHER TO ME!

BUT DINO  
ARMANI MAKES  
**FEW** MISTAKES...  
AND NONE GO  
UNRECTIFIED  
FOR LONG...

I... TOLD... YOU...  
THE... TRUTH... DINO...  
I... I... **LOVED**... YOU  
WHY... COULDN'T... YOU  
TRUST... ME...  
**WHY...?**



YOU DIDN'T  
**TELL ME!** NONE  
OF YOU! DO I HAVE  
TO GET **ALL** MY  
INFORMATION  
SECOND-HAND?  
YOU **KNEW** WHAT  
WAS GOING ON  
BETWEEN  
ANGELA AND  
JIMMIE! AND  
YET NOT ONE OF  
YOU SAID A  
**WORD** ABOUT  
IT!

WHAT ARE  
YOU **LOOKING**  
AT? **HER?** WELL,  
TAKE A **LONG**  
**HARD** LOOK!

"THIS IS WHAT  
HAPPENS TO **ANY**  
**BODY** WHO FIGURES  
TO **CROSS** ME! YOU  
PLAY MY RULES..."

"OR  
YOU DON'T  
PLAY AT  
**ALL!**"

NOW HAS  
SOMEBODY **ELSE** GOT A  
SECRET I SHOULD KNOW  
ABOUT? SOMEBODY **ELSE**  
THINK THEY CAN PUSH  
DINO ARMANI OFF THE  
**TOP?** LET ME HEAR  
IT NOW!

WE DIDN'T KNOW  
ANYTHING ABOUT IT,  
DINO! THAT'S THE  
**TRUTH!**

WE'RE  
**WITH** YOU,  
DINO! ALL  
THE WAY!

ONE  
THOUSAND  
PERCENT.

**NO,**  
DINO! **NO**  
**SECRETS!**

WHAT-  
EVER YOU SAY,  
BOSS!



YOU *KNOW* WHO'S THE **BOSS** AROUND HERE! DON'T FORCE ME TO **REMIN**D YOU AGAIN!

NOW... THERE'S GOING TO BE SOME **CHANGES... BIG** CHANGES... STARTING **HERE** AND GOING RIGHT TO THE TOP.

NO MORE WILL DINO ARMANI BE MADE A **LACKEY**. NOT BY THE **HEADS** OF THE **FAMILIES**... NOT BY **ANYBODY**. STARTING **NOW** DINO ARMANI WORKS FOR **HIMSELF!**

GOT A NEW DEAL FOR YOU BOYS. AND WITH YOUR HELP, I'M **TAKING OVER!**



SOUNDS GREAT, DINO.



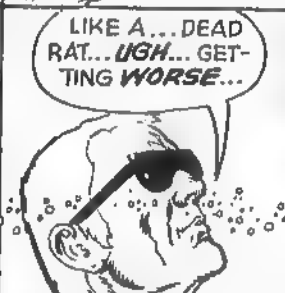
I... WE... WE'RE BEHIND... YOU...



WHA... WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?



A... SMELL... HORRIBLE!



LIKE A... DEAD RAT... UGH... GETTING WORSE...



GOD! IT'S... MAKIN' ME... UGH... SICK...



PUTRID... STINGIN' MY NOSE...



SEEMS TO BE COMIN' FROM... WHERE... DINO IS...



OOP..! I MEAN... THAT'S NOT... WHAT I MEAN... EXACTLY...



WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU MEAN? A SMELL? IS THAT A JOKE? THAT I SMELL BAD?



NO, NO, NO, DINO! I... MEAN... IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE! **REALLY!** JUST BACK FROM A LONG TRIP AND ALL... JUST A BAD JOKE..!



YOU **SLIMY** WEASEL! I'M **SICK** OF YOUR **JOKE**S AND YOUR **MISTAKE**S, AND YOUR **LIE**S! IT **STOP**S NOW!

YOU SAID  
NO SECRETS!  
I WAS ONLY TELL-  
ING YOU THE TRUTH  
...DINO! DON'T!  
**NOOOO!**



**DIINOOO!**

**BLAM!  
BLAM!**



IT'S...  
TOO...LATE  
FOR...YOU...  
DINO! YOU...  
CAN'T...EVEN  
FACE...THE  
**TRUTH...**



TELL...  
HIM. TELL  
HIM... HE  
SMELLS...  
LIKE... A  
DIRTY...  
DOG...

A...  
SPOILED  
PU... PU...  
PUTRID...  
THING...  
**AGGH.**



**YEAH, C'MON AND TELL  
ME! ALL OF YOU... WHAT?  
THEY'VE RUN OFF!**

**SCARED  
OF ME, THE  
SPINELESS  
SOP!**

BUT WHY **ALL** OF  
THEM? THEY HAD ME  
OUTNUMBERED. THEY  
KNEW I COULDN'T  
PUSH THEM TOO FAR!



THEY'RE  
**REALLY** IN FOR IT  
WHEN THEY GET  
BACK... I'M...  
:SNIFF: GOING  
TO... :SNIFF:...

HOW CAN  
I SMELL SO  
BAD AND  
NOT **KNOW**  
IT? :SNIFF: DOESN'T  
MAKE  
SENSE...

I DON'T  
SMELL ANY-  
THING.



:SNIFF: I  
MIGHT BE **SICK**  
OR SOMETHING...  
AND... :SNIFF: NOT  
BE ABLE TO  
SMELL IT...

I'D BETTER  
GET THEM BACK.  
THEY'VE LEFT  
ME ALONE...!  
COULD BE  
**DANGEROUS** IF  
MY **ENEMIES**  
FOUND OUT...!

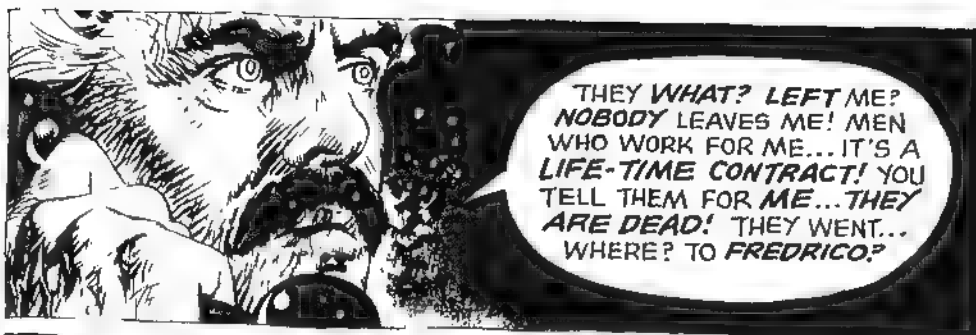




SOME TIME HAD PASSED BEFORE DINO BECAME AWARE OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF HIS PREDICAMENT. INFORMATION CAME TO HIM BY PHONE, FROM HIS MAN *INSIDE*...



WHO? VISCELLI? WHAT ABOUT MY MEN?



THEY WHAT? LEFT ME? NOBODY LEAVES ME! MEN WHO WORK FOR ME... IT'S A LIFE-TIME CONTRACT! YOU TELL THEM FOR ME... THEY ARE DEAD! THEY WENT... WHERE? TO FREDRICO?

THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID, DINO! THE HEADS OF THE FAMILIES... FREDRICO, TOO... ARE MOST UNHAPPY. YOUR MEN TOLD THEM ABOUT YOUR PLAN TO TAKE OVER. IT LOOKS VERY BAD, DINO...

ANOTHER THING. I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT... BUT THEY TOLD ME THEY'D RATHER DIE THAN BE NEAR THAT HORRIBLE SMELL...



REMAIN CALM. HAVE TO THINK. IF FREDRICO AND THE OTHER FAMILY HEADS SIDE AGAINST ME, I NEED A PLAN.



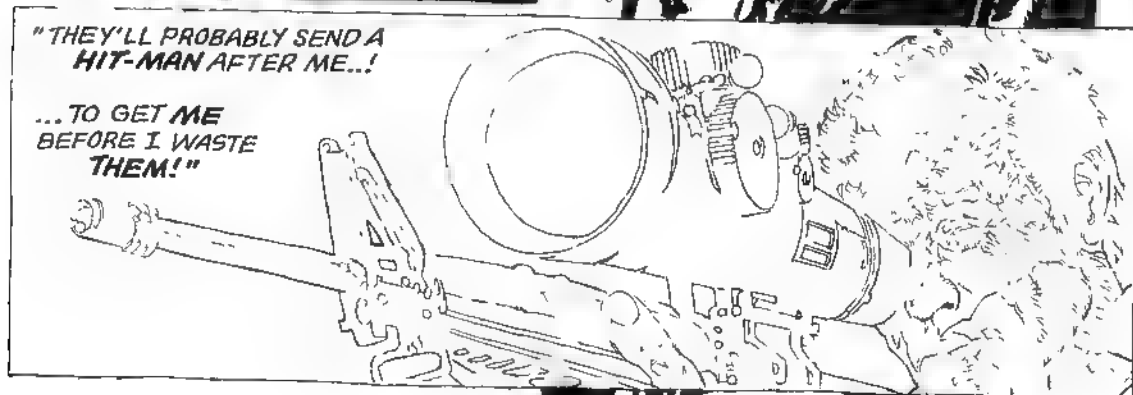
I CAN'T STAY HERE, THAT'S CERTAIN. I'LL HAVE TO PULL OUT... MAKE A RUN FOR IT WHILE I STILL HAVE THE TIME...

FILTHY, STINKING TRAITORS. THEY DO THIS TO ME AFTER I TAKE THEM UNDER MY WING. BUT I'LL BE BACK! NOTHING WILL SAVE THEIR SLIMY HIDES!



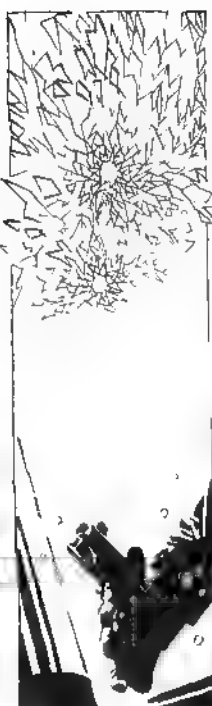
"THEY'LL PROBABLY SEND A HIT-MAN AFTER ME...!

...TO GET ME BEFORE I WASTE THEM!"





FREDRICO ARMANI BENT FORWARD UNEASILY. THE OTHERS TOOK IT FOR **AUTHORIZATION**, AND HE DID NOT OPPOSE IT. THE **DECISION** TO ELIMINATE **DINO** FOLLOWED!



**ALREADY!** THEY'VE **ALREADY** SENT THEIR **VULTURES!** I HAVE TO GET **OUT** OF HERE!



THE **ROOF** AND **STREET** ARE **COVERED**. I'LL HAVE TO USE THE **ALLEY...**



THERE'S **NO ESCAPE**, **DINO!** YOU'RE EASIER TO SMELL OUT THAN A **FISH MARKET!**

**MISSED!** YOU WON'T GET **ANOTHER** CHANCE!



HAVE I MADE THE **RIGHT** **DECISION**, **MARIO?** HE IS THE **SON** OF MY **BROTHER**.



YES, **FREDRICO**, **DINO** HAS BECOME TOO **DANGEROUS** FOR US TO DEAL WITH. HE'S TOO **RUTHLESS...** HE **MURDERS** WHEN **BUSINESS** IS NOT INVOLVED.



I'M **SAFE**. NOT EVEN MY **TRAITOROUS** **FRIENDS** KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS **CHOPPER**. I'VE SAVED IT FOR JUST SUCH AN **OCCASION**.



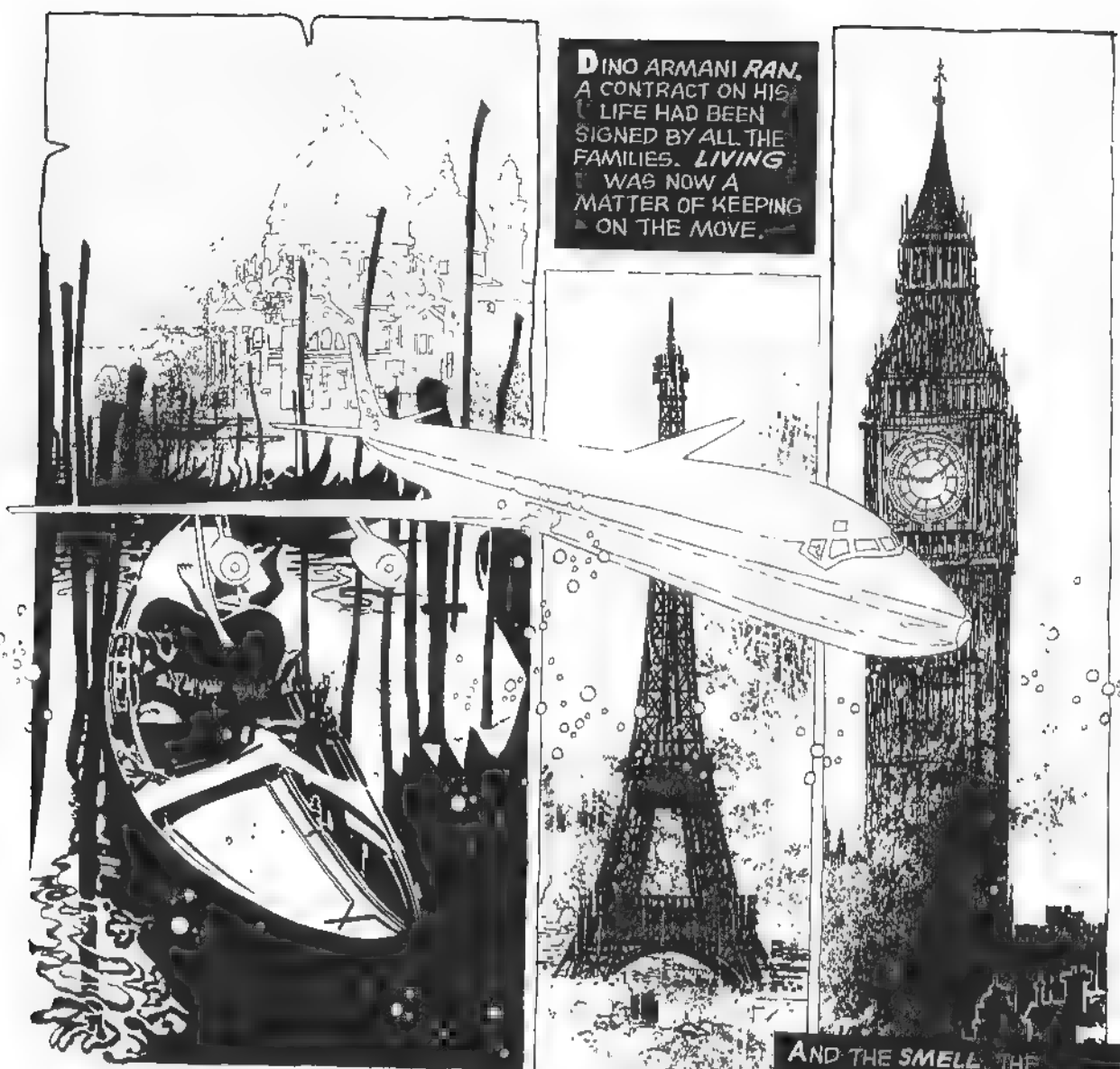
**DINO** **ARMANI** LAUGHED AS THE **HELICOPTER** CUT UPWARD. HE WOULD BE **BACK!** AND THE **THOUGHT** OF **SWEET** **VENGEANCE** MADE HIM **HAPPY!**



VERY WELL, **MARIO**. DO WHAT **MUST** BE DONE.

THIS MAN IS **TOTALLY** **EVIL...** AND LIKE A **RABID** **DOG**, HE MUST BE **DESTROYED**.

**DINO ARMANI RAN.**  
A CONTRACT ON HIS  
LIFE HAD BEEN  
SIGNED BY ALL THE  
FAMILIES. **LIVING**  
WAS NOW A  
MATTER OF KEEPING  
ON THE MOVE.



THEY CLOSE IN. IN LONDON:  
IN PARIS. VIENNA. BERLIN.  
DINO ARMANI WAS **RUNNING**  
**OUT** OF CITIES. AND IN EACH  
CITY, THEY DREW **CLOSER.**

AND THE **SMELL.** THE  
ROTTED ODOR THAT ENGULFED  
HIM WAS LEADING THEM **TO**  
**HIM.** IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO  
STOP FOR LONG IN ANY ONE  
PLACE...HIS TRACKS WERE  
INEVITABLY PICKED UP.




THEY  
**NEVER**  
LET UP! IT'S  
THAT **SMELL!**  
THAT **DAMNED**  
**SMELL!!**

HIS PURSUERS CONTINUED  
THEIR RELENTLESS **DAGGING.**

OBVIOUSLY, DINO THOUGHT, THE ONLY  
WAY TO GET RID OF THE BLOODHOUNDS  
WAS TO GET RID OF THE **SCENT.**







I'M VERY SORRY, MONSIEUR ARMANI. YOUR CASE IS FAR TOO **OBSCURE** FOR US TO DARE **ANYTHING** AT THIS TIME.

HERR ARMANI, THE ANALYSIS REPORTS ARE ALL **NEGATIVE**. ALL OUR EQUIPMENT SHOWS **NOTHING**. IT'S A **TOTALLY UNKNOWN PHENOMENA**.


IT'S **INCREDIBLE**, SIGNORE ARMANI. THERE IS NO **MEDICAL PRECEDENT**. PERHAPS IF I COULD ONLY PERSUADE YOU TO **REMAIN** HERE A FEW WEEKS...

YOUR CASE ESCAPES ALL PRESENT MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE. AND, I WOULD SAY, ALL **HUMAN KNOWLEDGE**! YOUR CURE, VERY FRANKLY, RESTS IN HANDS **BEYOND EARTHLY LIMITATIONS**!

"BEYOND EARTHLY LIMITATIONS!" YES, MAYBE. THE **MALADY** AS THE **CURE**. PERHAPS THIS WAS A KIND OF PUNISHMENT... FROM **ABOVE**...

DINO ARMANI CONTEMPLATED HIS HOPELESSNESS. THE ACRID STILETTO SHARP **ODOR** WAS IN FACT HIS ONLY **REAL ENEMY**.

THE HAMMER OF **GOD**? THE LORD BEATING HIM TO DEATH WITH A **BLUNT INSTRUMENT**? DINO ARMANI DID NOT KNOW.



HE ONLY KNEW THAT, MADLY, **DESPERATELY**, HE ONLY WANTED TO **LIVE**.

AND THE **CLINGING** STENCH MARKED HIM LIKE A MOVING **TARGET**..!

BY CHANCE OR CIRCUM-  
STANCE, OR EVEN SOME  
THING ELSE, FOR SEVERAL  
YEARS AFTERWARD, DINO  
*DID* MANAGE TO REMAIN  
*ALIVE* BUT *JUST* ALIVE

THE ROTTING SMELL ABOUT  
HIM WAS LIKE A FENCE  
THAT SEPARATED HIM  
FROM ALL BUT THE *MEAGER-  
EST* OF EXISTENCES! THE  
SUFFERING AND TORMENT  
HE LIVED WITH DAILY  
STAINED ITSELF ON HIS  
FACE, AND TIME ITSELF  
GREW *INDIGNANT* OF HIM.



*PHEWW!*  
JEEZUS, DID *YOU*  
DO THAT, ARTIE?

AWW, GOWAN,  
WATCHA TALKIN'  
'BOUT? I DIDN'  
DO NUTHIN'.

IN ANOTHER  
TIME, I COULD'VE  
HAD HIM *DUMPED*  
FOR THAT. BUT NOW...  
EVERYWHERE I GO...  
I CAN'T EVEN APPROACH  
ANYBODY TO BEG A COIN.  
EVEN *FILTHY DRUNKS*  
WON'T COME NEAR  
ME...!

WHOA! IT'S  
COMIN' FROM *THAT*  
GUY! HEY, *YOU!*  
*FELLA!* GET  
*OUTTA* HERE!

IN THE END, THE ASH AND SOOT SURROUND THE PRISONERS WITHIN ONE PRISONER, MORE THAN OTHERS, FEELS ITS UNNATURAL DREAD.

DINO ARMANI, ONCE THE HATED AND FEARED UNDERWORLD LEADER, REDUCED TO A DERELICT, A SMELLING HUSK, FACELESS, NEITHER HATING NOR HATED. A BROKEN MAN... ROTTING IN HIS OWN EVIL...! SITTING AT THE BOTTOM AFTER HIS LONG FALL FROM POWER!

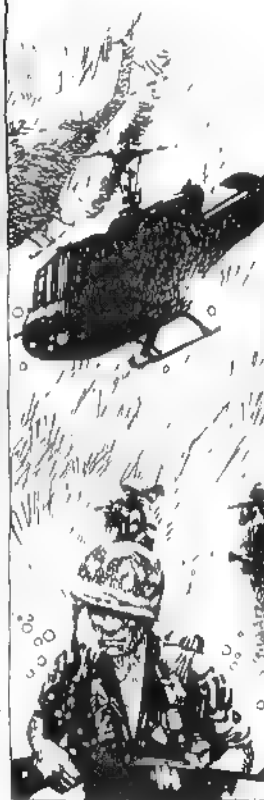


LONG SINCE FORGOTTEN BY HIS ENEMIES, THE CONTRACT ON HIS LIFE EXPIRED! YET THROUGH THE YEARS HE MOVES ON, AIMLESSLY! THE SMELL OF HIS OWN EVIL BECOMING MORE AND MORE OBSCURED BY THE CORRUPTION AROUND HIM

THE SAME DISEASE HE HAD BEEN INFLECTED WITH WAS NOW ATTACKING THE ENTIRE WORLD AROUND HIM

THE EVIL STENCH OF DRUGS... OF FLYING ON AN ETHEREAL HIGH TO THE ULTIMATE WASTE!

THE DEATHLY STINK OF WAR. POLITICIANS BUYING THEM WHOLESALE..!



THE UGLY SMELL OF POVERTY. HUNGER... DISCRIMINATION... AND NATIONS' DISGRACES!



DINO ARMANI. NOWHERE TO GO. LIVING, SO PRECIOUS TO HIM, BECOMES A MISERABLE EXISTENCE... WALLOWING IN THE TOXIC BREATH OF CIVILIZATION... TAKING MORE THAN IT GIVES!



IT CLOSES IN ON HIM, THE CORRUPTION, THE GARBAGE, THE FUTILITY OF ANY BUT THE BLEAKEST OF FUTURES.

IT BREATHES DOWN HIS NECK... HOT AND HEAVY.

...THE SMELL OF A WORLD DYING... ROTTING FROM THE EVILNESS WITHIN...

...UNTIL AT LAST, THE SMELL BECOMES TOO MUCH EVEN FOR DINO ARMANI...

BANG!



# PROLOGUE



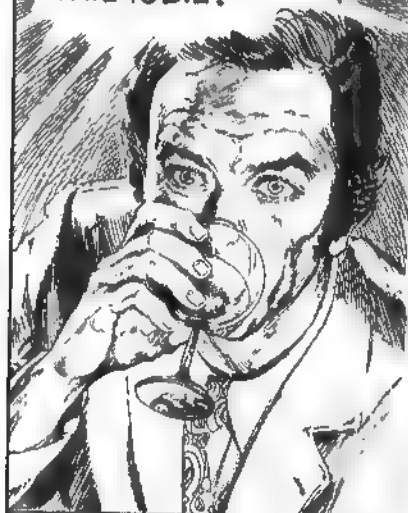


DOUG BROODED... DRANK IN A LOUNGE AT THE AIRPORT... TRIED TO FIND HIMSELF IN A LIFE THAT SEEMED SUDDENLY *UNREAL*!



HE MADE HIS *DECISION* WHILE DOWNING HIS *FIFTH* BOURBON AND SODA...

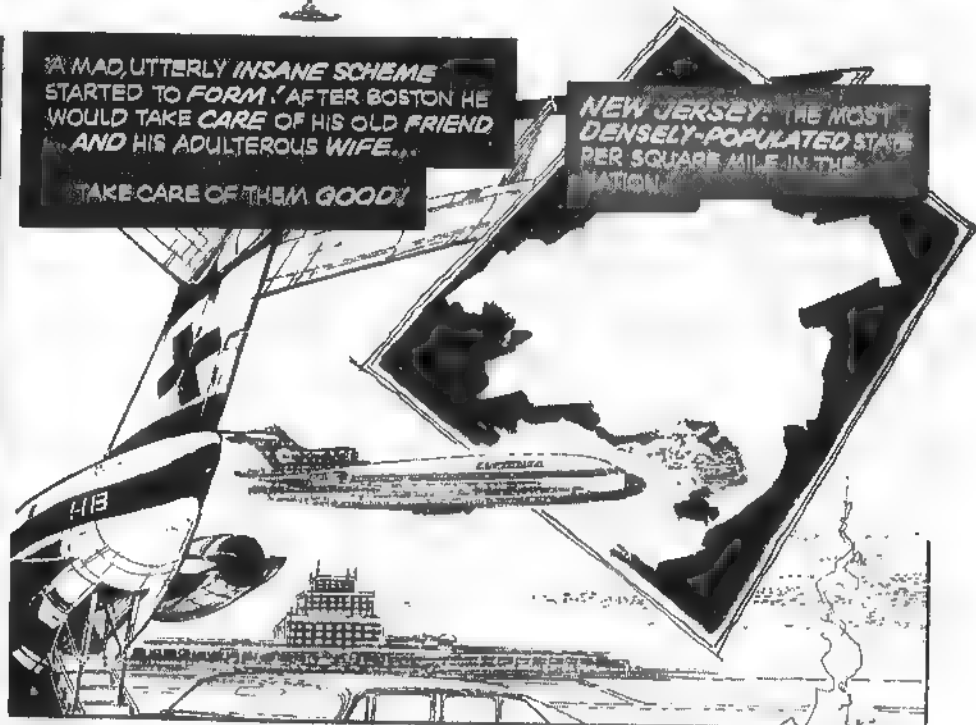
*RITCHIE* WILL HAVE TO DIE!



A MAD, UTTERLY *INSANE* SCHEME STARTED TO *FORM*! AFTER BOSTON HE WOULD TAKE *CARE* OF HIS OLD FRIEND AND HIS ADULTEROUS *WIFE*...

TAKE CARE OF THEM *GOOD*!

NEW JERSEY: THE MOST DENSELY-POPULATED STATE PER SQUARE MILE IN THE NATION.



THE PINE BARRENS: THOUSANDS OF WOODED ACRES... UNTAMED WILDERNESS... EVER RESISTING THE TECHNOLOGICAL TOUCH OF THE 20TH CENTURY!

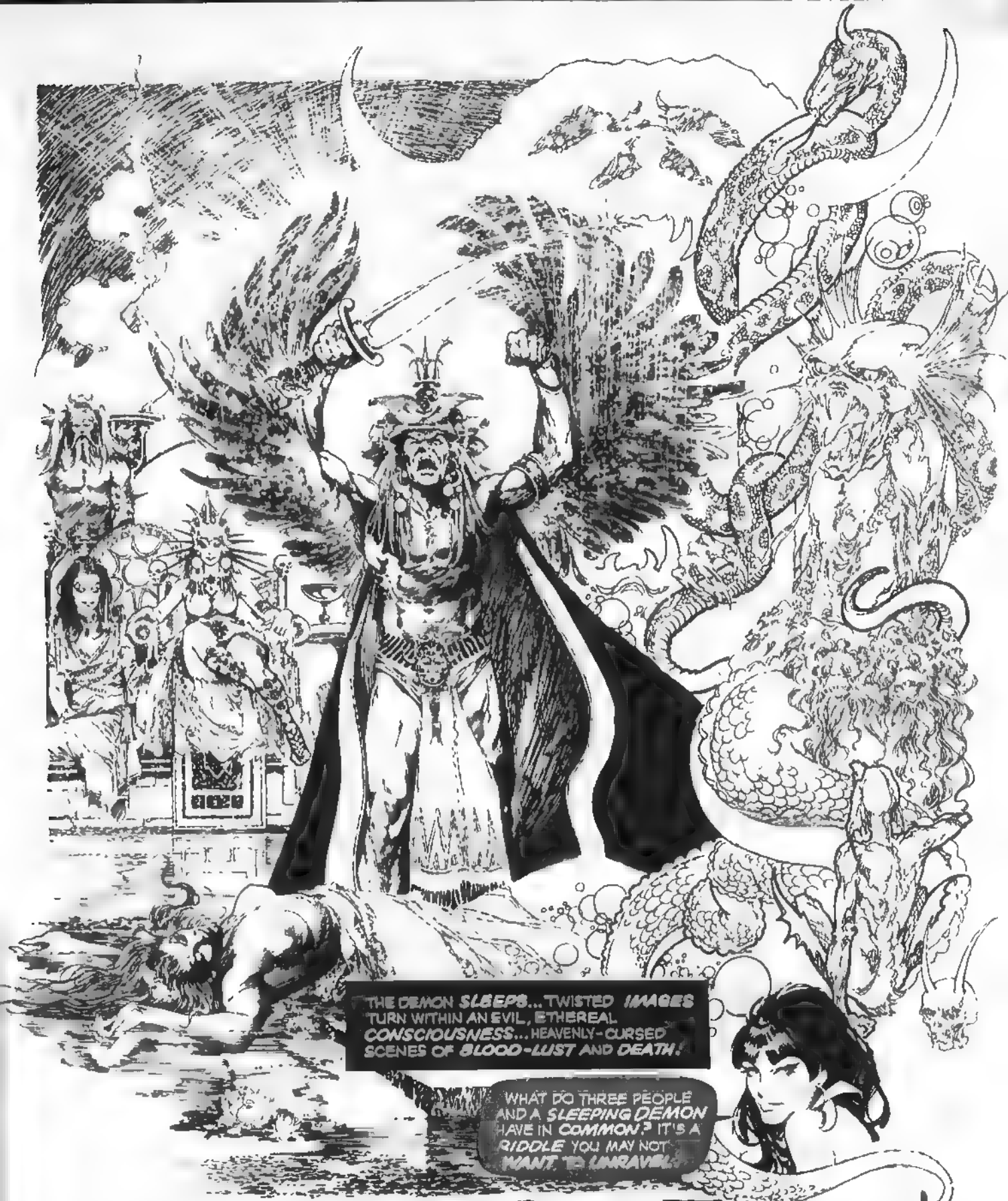
FACT: A MONSTER DOES THEREIN DWELL!

TA-RA-KA SLUMBERS... A DEEP, ALMOST DREAMLESS SLEEP.

ALMOST.







THE DEMON SLEEPS...TWISTED IMAGES  
TURN WITHIN AN EVIL, ETHEREAL  
CONSCIOUSNESS...HEAVENLY-CURSED  
SCENES OF BLOOD-LUST AND DEATH!

WHAT DO THREE PEOPLE  
AND A SLEEPING DEMON  
HAVE IN COMMON? IT'S A  
RIDDLE YOU MAY NOT  
WANT TO UNRAVEL.

# JUST LIKE OLD TIMES!

STORY: RICH MARGOPOULOS / ART: RAMON TORRENTS

THE DEMON HAS POSSESSED  
MANY BEINGS... RESIDED IN  
COUNTLESS FORMS.

ONCE HE WAS A FETID  
IDOL-GOD IN ANCIENT  
INDIA... DEMANDING  
ENDLESS HUMAN SACRIFICES  
AS APPEASEMENT...

...THEN AN EVIL DRUID  
PRIEST... WHOSE FLASHING  
BLADE DEFILED THE SOFT  
FLESH OF VESTAL VIRGINS...

...AND A FLEEING WITCH-  
WRAITH IN OLD SALEM...  
EXORCISED BY A BISHOP'S  
CALL TO HIS GOD!

SUCH THOUGHTS! SUCH DEMENTED,  
DEVIL-FRAUGHT DREAMS! WHEN  
TA-RA-KA WAKENS HE MUST  
IMPOSE HIS WILL ANEW... ON A  
BEWILDERED WORLD!

BUT FOR NOW PRAISE GOD,  
THE DEMON SLEEPS...

RITCHIE! SINCE  
YOU'RE A FREE LANCE  
WRITER, I THOUGHT  
THIS MIGHT APPEAL  
TO YOU!

DAMN RIGHT! A  
TRIP TO THE PINE  
BARRENS TO CATCH  
A DEVIL!

BUT DOUG...  
HOW CAN YOU BE  
SURE THERE IS  
SUCH A THING?

CHECK OUT  
THESE OLD NEWS  
CLIPPINGS!

IN 1955 TWO  
HUNTERS WERE  
FOUND DISMEMBERED...  
TORN LIMB FROM LIMB!

...AND ABOUT  
THREE YEARS AGO... A  
HERMIT WAS SCARED TO  
DEATH! HIS DOG WAS  
LATER FOUND...  
MAULED!



SOMETHING'S  
OUT THERE ALRIGHT!  
SOMETHING **ALIVE!**

I'VE GOT THE  
GEAR **PACKED!**  
WE CAN **LEAVE**  
AT **SUNRISE!**



GOT A LONG DAY  
AHEAD! TIME I **SACKED**  
OUT... CAUGHT SOME  
**WINKS!**

SEE YOU **BOTH**  
TOMORROW!

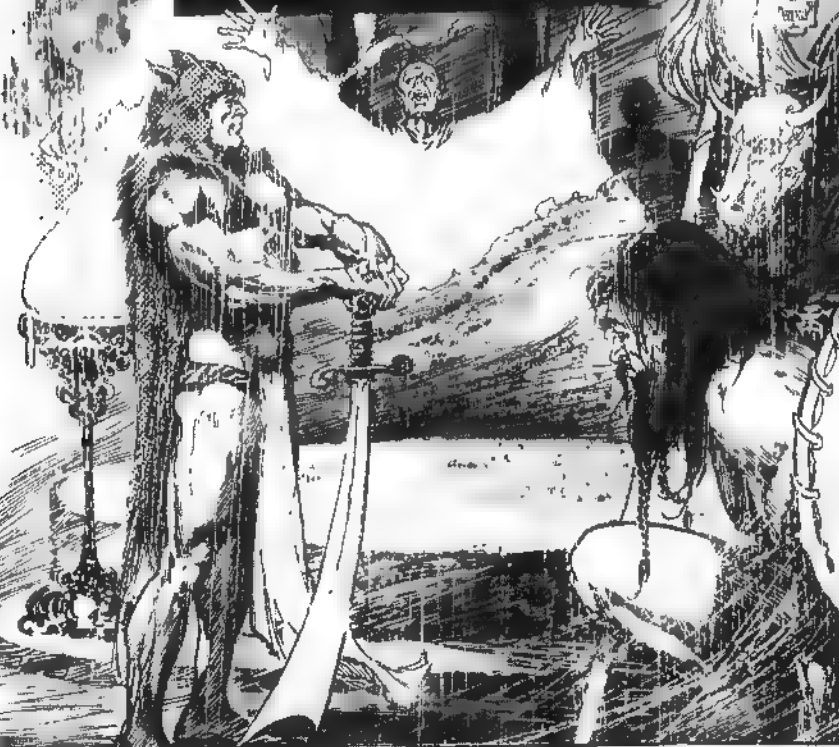
**BYE-BYE,**  
RITCHIE!

MAKE THIS  
**GOOD, SUSAN..**  
IT'S YOUR **LAST**  
FAREWELL!

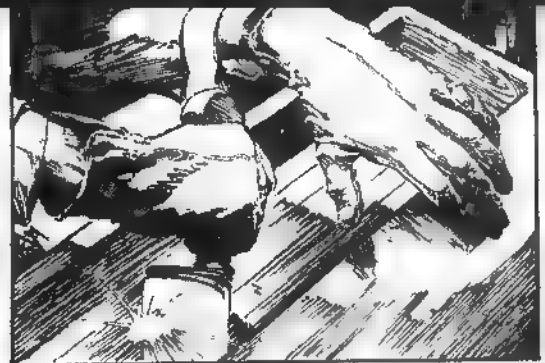
AND THE DEMON  
SLEEPS ON IN  
THE DARKNESS...



**AAAAHHHH!** THE DEMON SIGHS...  
REMEMBERING... LONG-LOST GLORY...  
THE COOL DANK OF **STONEHENGE**,  
A COLD GREY ALTAR OF **BLOOD-**  
**STAINED GRANITE.**



WHILE DOUG STARTS THE FIRST PHASE OF HIS  
WELL-PLANNED **REVENGE.**





THE GLORY OF THOSE OLD DAYS...  
THE DEMON REMEMBERS...! OH, IT  
WAS GOOD!

SUSAN!  
CAN YOU COME IN  
HERE FOR A  
MINUTE?

YES?

UNSPEAKABLY GOOD.

I'VE GOT  
SOMETHING...

...FOR  
YOU!

...JUST...

DOUG WRAPPED HIS WIFE'S STILL-WARM BODY IN CANVAS AND BURIED HER AMID NEAT GARDEN ROWS OF LETTUCE AND TOMATOES!

HE DID NOT SLEEP WELL THAT NIGHT!

IT WASN'T SO MUCH PANGS OF REGRET OVER SUSAN... BUT RATHER, HE COULDN'T WAIT TO FINISH OFF RITCHIE!

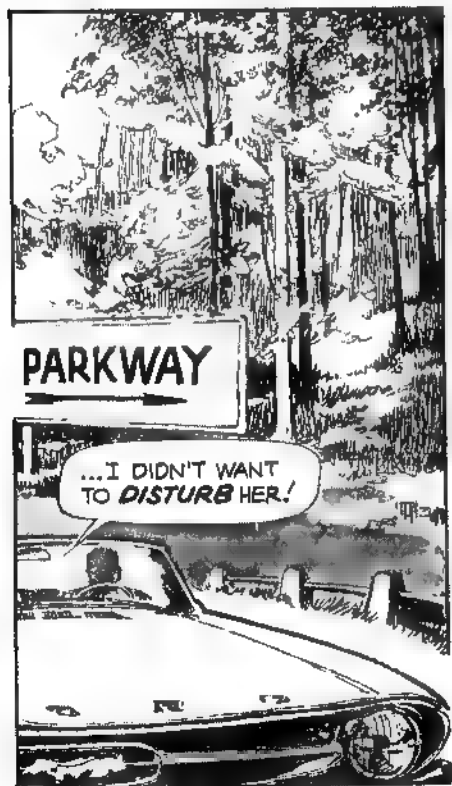
BRRRRRRRING!



HI YA, EARLYBIRD!

WHERE'S SUZZIE? ISN'T SHE GONNA WISH US GOOD LUCK?

NO... SHE'S DEAD TO THE WORLD!



PARKWAY

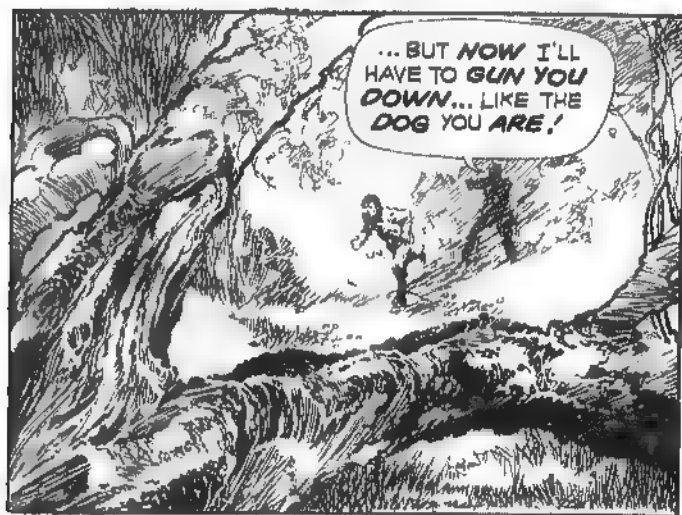
...I DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB HER!

HOURS OF DRIVING... THEN HOURS OF WALKING... UNTIL...

AT LAST! THE MOMENT I'VE LIVED FOR... WHEN I BRING THIS GRIM CHARADE TO A CLOSE!

THIS IS IT, OLD "FRIEND"... THE END OF THE LINE!!







TA-RA-KA STARS...

WHO DARES DISTURB THE  
DEMON OF THE WOODS?

BLURRED  
EYES TREMBLE  
OPEN...  
FASTEN ON A  
FEEBLE  
HUMAN  
FORM!

WHAT IS THE MAN *DOING*?  
HURRIEDLY FEEDING BRASS  
PELLETS INTO A METAL  
AND WOOD TUBE!

PERHAPS IT IS A *NEW*  
WITCHCRAFT RITUAL...  
A *PROTECTION-  
SPELL*...!

YES! THE MAGIC *STINGS*...  
BUT IT IS *NOT* POTENT  
ENOUGH!

THE MORTAL *LACKS*  
THE SKILLED TOUCH OF  
AN *EXORCIST*!



MIGHTY MASSIVE *LIMBS*  
ENCIRCLE DOUG'S FLESH  
AND BLOOD FRAME!

TA-RA-KA PONDER'S, 'SHOULD  
HE *CRUSH* HIS PREY LIKE AN  
OVER-RIPE GRAPE...OR *POSSESS*  
ITS BODY... *RAPE* ITS VERY SOUL!

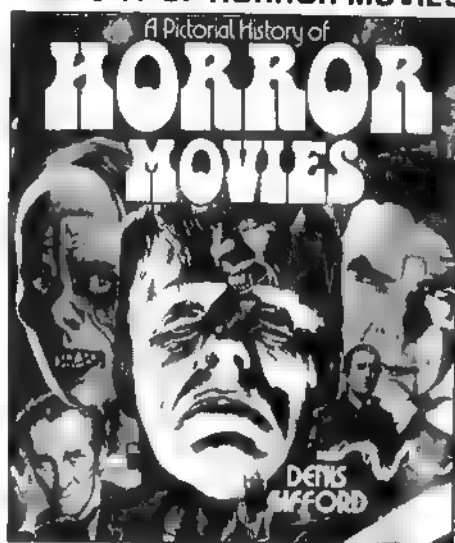


THE *DEMON* WEIGHS THE VALUE OF EACH  
ALTERNATIVE! IN EITHER CASE, THE  
*DECISION* WILL BE LIKE OLD TIMES.

...SO *UNSPEAKABLY GOOD*!

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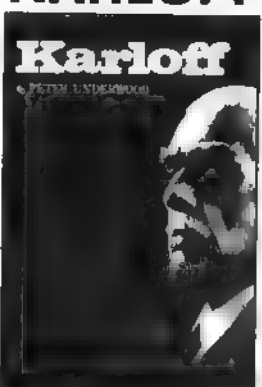
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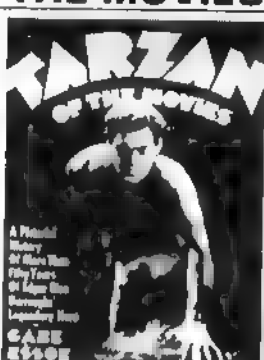
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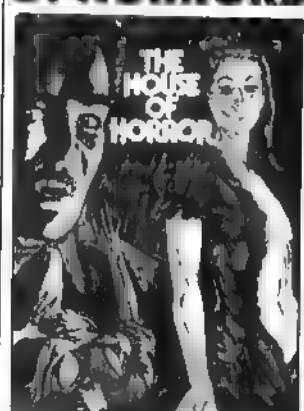
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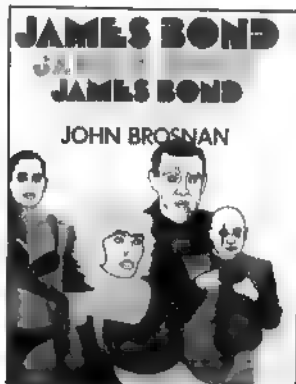
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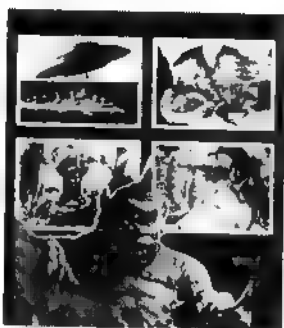


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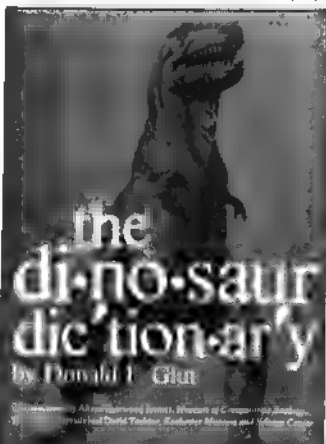
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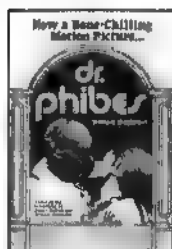
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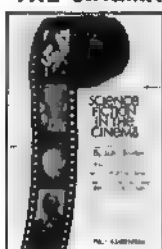
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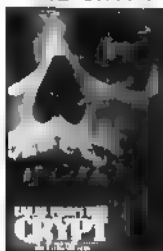
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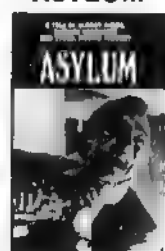
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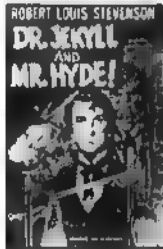
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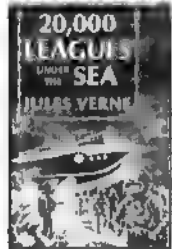
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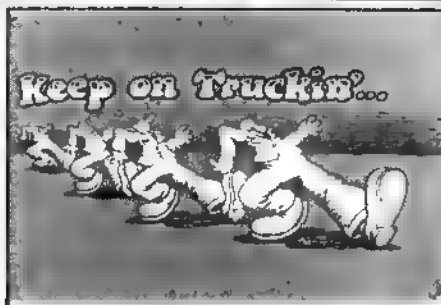
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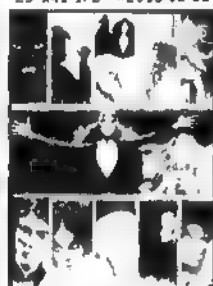
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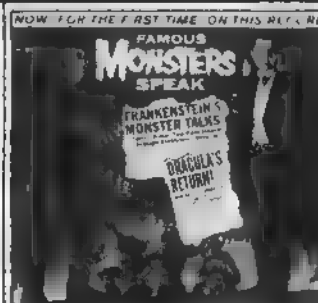


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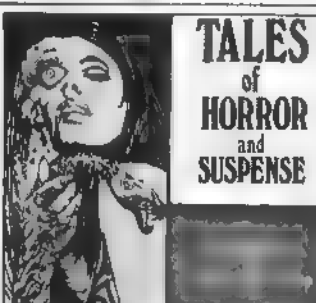
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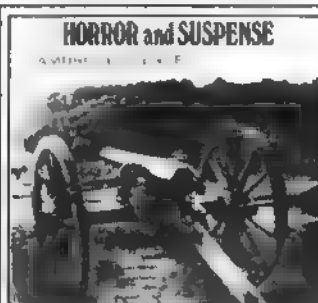
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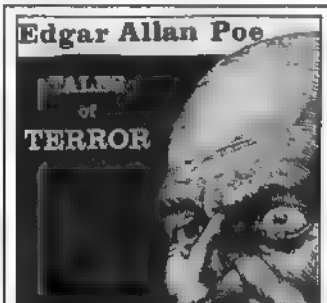
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# FANTASTICAL LP RECORD ALBUMS!



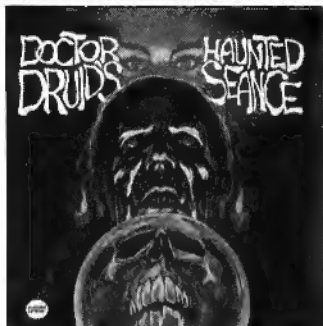
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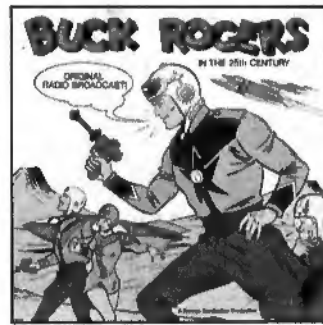
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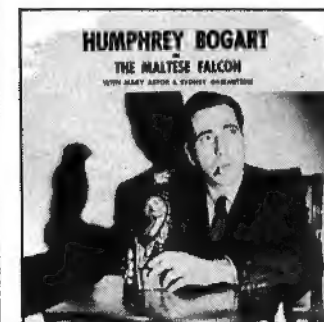
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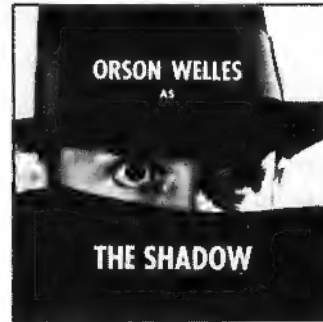
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